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A. T. Robertson









A. T. ROBERTSON

*A Biography*



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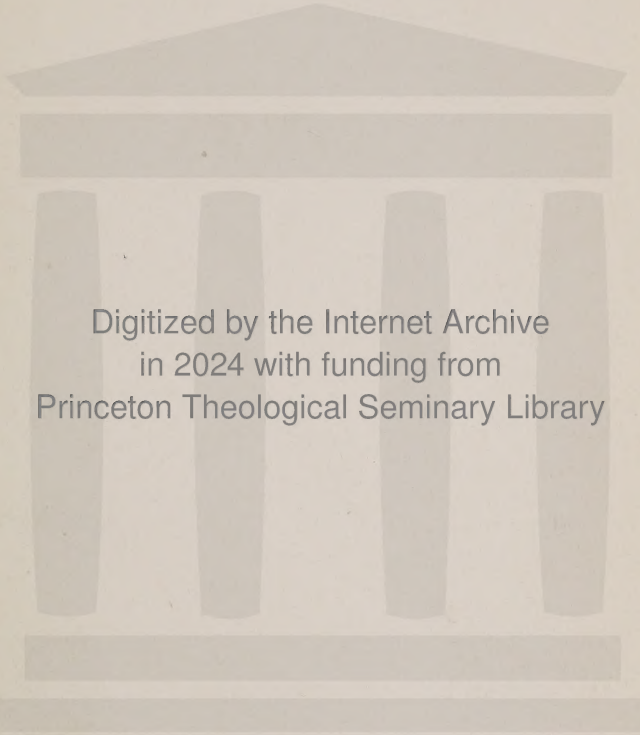
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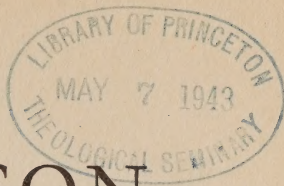
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A. T. ROBERTSON

From the portrait by Charles Sneed Williams



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A. T. ROBERTSON

*A Biography*

✓ By  
EVERETT GILL, TH.D., D.D.

NEW YORK  
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1943



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First Printing



## PREFACE

The writing of this life-story was not of my own choosing. It is an offering on the altar of friendship in response to request. I felt no capacity for so high a task—that of making a portrait of a great man. Yet, if “the proper study of mankind is man,” the biographer may indeed glory in his calling, in special measure, if the subject of his study be a noble and worthy man. Such an experience is highly enriching, as must always be when one comes into a clearer understanding of the mind and heart of such a man.

This work of portraiture was arduous, in the very nature of the case. Portrait painting is never easy, there being so many lights and shadows to be considered, so many impressions and expressions to be recorded and blended. The difficulties of writing this life did not lie in the lack of materials, but rather in their superabundance. Dr. Robertson, following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Dr. Broadus, through life carefully kept files of his correspondence and related material. The difficulty lay rather in selecting what was more relevant to a biography which was not intended to be exhaustive, yet adequate to its purpose.

The qualification for writing this biography to which the author may lay claim is a life-time acquaintance with Dr. Robertson and his family, which began even with Dr. Broadus' family from the first Seminary days. The gracious hospitality of Dr. and Mrs. Robertson, of which their foreign

friends spoke with such deep and enthusiastic appreciation, we of our family also have known, especially on furloughs from foreign lands, through many years.

The task was lightened by the co-operation of the Robertson family, all of whom are writers. It is with peculiar and poignant grief that we must add that Mrs. Eleanor Robertson Easley, older daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Robertson, who first of the Robertson family suggested that the author of these lines be asked to prepare a biography of her father, suddenly passed away, to the unspeakable sorrow of her innumerable friends, only a few days after the book, in which she had taken such interest, was finished. Besides, in response to a general call, more than three score of Dr. Robertson's former students and friends made contributions, some at length and with care, of precious biographical material, which constitute valuable data for any later and thorough biography which may be written. The author can only express his deep regret that it was impossible, under the circumstances, to give individual credit for much that has been included. *Annex I* at the back of this volume gives the alphabetical list of these generous and much appreciated contributors.

If these pages will help to make Archibald Thomas Robertson live again in the memory of those who knew him, and in the imagination of those who did not have that privilege, with somewhat of reality, the author will rest content.

E. G.

Wake Forest, North Carolina.

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## INTRODUCTION

The summer sun rose over the cool and lovely Connecticut Valley. East Northfield, with its thousands of visitors, was awakening to a new day. The broad macadamized two-mile-long main street, with its four rows of stately old elms, was gradually filling with pedestrians, while multitudes began to move across the lawns.

On that fair morning it was almost impossible to imagine that the red clouds of a World War hung over Europe; that vast armies were locked in deadly embrace and rivers of blood were flowing; that an age was dying and a new age being born. It was August the ninth, nineteen fourteen.

While pleasant odors of breakfasts-in-preparation drifted across the lawns, came the multitudes, many of whom gave evidence of having dressed hastily, moving toward the great auditorium. Some hurried forward to be sure of securing a seat. At last they were assembled, nearly two thousand of them. There were distinguished visitors from abroad—mystics, scholars, great preachers and expositors—who were becoming gravely perturbed over the tragedy which had overtaken their homeland and of the question of their return. There were besides large numbers of pastors and religious workers and multitudes of others who loved the Word of God.

After a brief prayer, in the tense silence, the speaker, Dr. Robertson, arose to make the New Testament live again in

the imagination and emotions of the hearers. "The Big Grammar," his *magnum opus*, which was to bear his name to every quarter of the globe, had just been printed. He was tired. In fact, he was more than weary. He was scarcely equal to the task of delivering a long course of lectures, involving the profoundest scholarship.

In spite of it all, he threw himself into his theme with abandon. He drew his vast audience along with him. At one point he was describing the courage of the Apostle Paul at Antioch when he faced Peter. It was all so real, so vivid to the speaker and hearer, that the vast audience spontaneously broke into unexpected applause. Such applause punctuated the rest of his lecture.

This was a new sort of thing, a new method of interpretation. Never had Bible expositor at Northfield or elsewhere spoken as this man. The saintly Dr. F. B. Meyer of London "was in ecstasies" and almost embraced him. Scores came forward to thank him. The crowds dispersed, some to a late breakfast, others to gather together in groups or to walk about to comment on their unusual experiences as he had opened to them the Scriptures, and their hearts burned within them.

This was the zenith, perhaps, of the labors of him who was accounted the most brilliant and popular expositor of the New Testament of his day. It has been said by his contemporaries that "never shall we see his like again." Who was this man from the South with keen blue eyes and the whimsical smile? Along what road had he come to this peak of eminence? That is the story to be told. But it is a long trail from Virginia to Massachusetts.

## "IN OLE VIRGINIA"

A small boy of three years stood under a white oak tree in Virginia. It was on the north side of the house. The little fellow was proudly arrayed in his red velvet suit. His blue eyes shone with excitement. "Uncle Abe" sat up in the driver's seat of the family carriage holding in the restive pair, waiting for "Miss Ella."

The family of Dr. John Robertson of Cherbury was ready to start on their annual visit to Grandmother Martin of Greenwood in the adjoining county, named for a former neighbor, Patrick Henry. It was an all-day journey of twenty-five miles. That was three years after the Emancipation and one year after Appomattox. Such was the earliest of the *Recollections* of the great scholar as he looked back wistfully across the more than fifty years.

Archibald Thomas Robertson was born on November 6, 1863, at Cherbury, the family home near Chatham, Pittsylvania County, Virginia, where he spent the first twelve years of his life. During the next ten years he grew up and spent his student days in North Carolina. The rest of his years of almost a half century, during which he accomplished his great life's work, he passed in Kentucky.

Three noble and contiguous states thus shared in the labors and honors of his life. But he never forgot that he was a Virginian. What Virginian ever did? Yet he was devoted to the Old North State, his second home, and to his great Alma Mater, Wake Forest College. Naturally, however, the tenderest ties of home and Seminary were entwined around Kentucky and her great metropolis.

His life was connected not only with three notable Southern states, but was lived in one of the great periods of our nation's history. It comprised three of our wars of freedom—the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and the First World War. He lived almost to the end of one of the important eras of the world's history, which is now rapidly coming to a close. His life, also, began and ended with two of the severest depressions of our history and included, in the intervening years, periods of prosperity.

Dr. Robertson has left two MSS in long hand, of priceless value to his family and historians. First, *A Brief Autobiography* of sixty-one pages written in a small business ledger, begun November 14, 1887, in Louisville, Kentucky. It is an outline of his life, especially of College and Seminary days, up to his entering the faculty of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary of Louisville.

The second is a much larger, cloth-bound book of one hundred and ten pages, begun at Louisville, July 6, 1915, twenty-eight years later, and entitled, *Recollections of My Early Life*. This is the story of those first years in the Old Dominion which became dearer to him with the passing years. These "Recollections" reveal a man of a delicacy of sensibilities and a tenderness of heart which few of his students could imagine, as they saw him come briskly into the class room with his arms full of books, mount the platform, deposit the books on the desk, look about to see if there were not a draught somewhere in the room and if the temperature were at the proper grade, and then suddenly say: "Let us pray!" and some moments later proceed promptly to business.



How strange, and even tragic, is life, that so frequently we journey side by side with a friend and never fully know him. We note his peculiarities of dress, his idiosyncrasies of manner and speech, and fail to know the real inner man. Dr. Robertson's six thousand students, and other thousands of those who hung upon his words in the great summer assemblies, knew only the scholarly and captivating interpreter of the New Testament. But he was more than what they saw. It is in these precious autobiographical notes jotted down amid the pressure of herculean tasks that the reader catches glimpses of the gentle man, revealed only to the loved ones of the home-circle, and possibly to a few intimate friends.

Both MSS are written in long hand, in a chirography which was the despair of type-setters and proof-readers. Only experts could read it. A leading denominational Board Secretary wrote in gentle protest saying that Doctor Bob's chirography was worse than his own. He admitted, however, that his own printer had averred that he could take any one of the Secretary's letters and use it for a claim-check at any Chinese laundry. But we must remember that handwriting is one of the modes of expression of character. Dr. Robertson's mind worked at such prodigious speed and his ideas poured forth in such volume that no hand of man ever created could set them down fast enough to make them intelligible except to the initiated. More slowly moving brains allow the hand time to indite ideas beautifully and accurately. These facts have always been the comfort and defense of poor penmen.

These autobiographical notes are priceless for one who

would essay to write Dr. Robertson's life. They enable him to trace the inner life story of the man from the days of the little boy of the red velvet suit to those of the young theological professor as he faced the great and unknown half century which awaited him. The rest of the story, as in the case of all public men, "belongs to history." The biographer is appalled at the vastness of the printed and written material that such a full life entails.

The biographer, also, is always confronted with the question, "How far back in the family history shall he go? How much heredity will the reading public endure?" As a rule we are interested only in our own family-trees, and even here the rule does not always work. Dr. Robertson's son and namesake, speaking of the family-tree, remarked: ". . . But maternal grandmothers are getting pretty far back . . .!" This is the typical attitude of youth. Yet in the case of Dr. Robertson, as is true of most of us, as the years went by he became more and more interested in his ancestry. This is increasingly true of Americans in general in our time. From pioneer days to the present, Americans have been so much interested in the question as to where they were going that they have not had time to find out where they came from.

These observations are not an apology for, but rather an explanation of, the genealogical story which we here briefly give.

PART I

# BACKGROUNDS





## CHAPTER I

# THE ROBERTSON CLAN AND THE MARTIN FAMILY

### THE ROBERTSON CLAN

The Robertsons are a numerous, ancient, and distinguished Scottish Clan. Alexander, son of Robert of Athol (d. 1460), took the name of "Robertson" (son of Robert), which is the origin of the family name.

Athol is a large highland district in the north of Perthshire, Scotland, near the Pass of Killiekrankie and south of the Grampian Mountains. Kinloch Rannoch, the largest loch in that region, was the ancient seat of the Robertsons.

The original coat-of-arms of the Robertson Clan goes back to Duncan of Athol (b. about 1275). That the civil and social conditions of central Scotland of that period must have been decidedly primitive is seen in the fact that Duncan was knighted by King Robert Bruce *for ridding the Athol highlands of wolves!* This explains the three wolf-heads on the clan's armorial bearings.

The Robertson genealogists trace their history back nearly a thousand years. Naturally this does not include those who, on their own initiative or otherwise, assumed the name in more recent times. The descendants of the ancient Earls of Athol came through Duncan of Athol, whose Gaelic name

was Donnachaidh (pronounced Dōn-a-chie, Gaelic for Duncan). This family origin leads to connections with the Malcolms, Davids, Duncans, and Roberts of the royal houses of Scotland, as well as with Alfred the Great and Edward III of England, and Philip II of Spain; while the American connections lead back to Chief Powhatan and Pocahontas. All Robertsons, naturally, are not in the direct line of descent. The number of Robertsons in the world is estimated at approximately twenty-five thousand.

Archibald Thomas Robertson was the fourth in the direct line of descent of his branch of the Robertsons of America.<sup>1</sup> Edward Robertson, his great-grandfather, came over from Scotland some time prior to the Revolution and resided in Petersburg, Virginia. He married Mary Thompson of Virginia. Their son, Thompson Robertson, died six years before A.T.R. was born. The fact that great-grandmother Mary Thompson gave her family name to her son indicates family pride.

Thompson Robertson did not remain in or about Petersburg, but moved some one hundred and twenty-five miles southwest and settled in Pittsylvania County and there made a name for himself. He married Chloe Shelton, and there were born of the union eight children, only two of whom attained to adult age. Thompson Robertson was a successful

<sup>1</sup> *The A. T. Robertson Branch:*

*Edward Robertson* (prob. 1755) of Scotland; m. Mary Thompson.

*Thompson Robertson* (Apr. 19, 1785–Mch. 30, 1857), son; m. Chloe Shelton (Sept. 2, 1792–Feb. 1873).

*John Robertson* (Feb. 7, 1825–June 29, 1914), son; m. Ella Martin (1828–1899).

*Archibald Thomas Robertson* (Nov. 6, 1863–Sept. 24, 1934), son; m. Ella Broadus (Apr. 19, 1872–..).

business man and accumulated considerable wealth according to the standards of ante-bellum days. He was founder and owner of "Robertson's Store" which was an institution of sufficient importance in that part of the Old Dominion to be placed on the maps of that region and period, and it was probably a post-office. The "Store" was located near Chatham on the road leading to the Meadows not far from Chalk Level.

Besides the "Store," Thompson Robertson acquired extensive farmlands and slaves. The surviving son, John, A.T.R.'s father, inherited fifteen hundred acres of land and a goodly number of slaves. Naturally an equal portion of the estate went also to the surviving sister who married a grandson of Patrick Henry, living in the county bearing his name.

Thompson Robertson inherited the Scottish love for learning. Although not a university man himself, he preserved, it would seem with a certain pride, his school-books which have been handed down to his great-grandson. Besides he gave his son the education of a gentleman. All this spells a man of high ideals and of financial standing.

When John was ready to settle down he had the means for building beautiful Cherbury Cottage for his bride of the adjoining county, Ella Martin, whose family had attained to distinction in Revolutionary days. John Robertson, after finishing his studies in medicine, settled down to the life of a country gentleman and physician at Cherbury Cottage. Here he passed some twenty-three years (1852-75), managing his plantation, directing his slaves, seeing his family of ten children grow up about him, and healing the countryside. He lived to a good old age, dying just before the out-

break of the First World War in 1914, at the age of eighty-nine. A grandson recalls "his blessing before he died."

A.T.R. was the fourth son and seventh child of Dr. John Robertson. He was born November 6, 1863, the year in which the slaves were freed. From that year onward, not suddenly nor disastrously, but surely, there came tragic changes in the fortunes of John Robertson of Cherbury. Appomattox loomed on the horizon, and just below it there rose Debts, Reconstruction Days and Hard Times.

In his *Recollections* Dr. Robertson said: "So our line runs back quickly to the Robertsons of Struan, and I felt a genuine pride when in Scotland in being on my native heath." He added with natural satisfaction, "The Robertson Clan has cut a large figure in Scottish history, and many evidences still survive of the power and prowess of the Robertson stock in Britain, not to say all over Australia, Canada and America."

### THE MARTIN FAMILY <sup>2</sup>

A.T.R. was a loyal Robertson, yet at the same time he was proud of his mother and of her Martin blood. He says: "I was told that I was like the Martins in personal appearance, which I took as a great compliment," though he added that

<sup>2</sup> *William Martin*, the Bristol, England, merchant of Pindergast Manor, Pembroke (d. 1760).

*Joseph Martin I* of England (b. about 1710—d. about 1760), son; m. Susanna Chiles of Virginia.

(*Gen.*) *Joseph Martin II* (1740—1808), son; m. Susanna Graves (d. Mch. 9, 1837 in her 79th yr.)

(*Col.*) *Joseph Martin III* (Sept. 22, 1785—Nov. 3, 1859), son; m. Sallie Dalton Hughes (Mar. 30, 1792; d. at 91).

*Ella Martin* (1828—1899), his daughter; m. John Robertson of Cherbury Cottage.



he would have been equally pleased to be said to resemble the Robertsons. The Martins of Henry and the Robertsons of Pittsylvania counties were as proud of their blood and standing as any family in either county.

From Colonial and Revolutionary days the Martins left their impress on the history of the country. This branch of the American Martins goes back to the first quarter of the eighteenth century. They began with a William, followed by three Josephs in a row.

Professor Weeks in his brochure entitled, *General Martin and the War of the Revolution in the West*, speaking of the less known heroes of the Revolutionary period, says: "Of this latter class of State builders no better type can be found than the Martin family of Albemarle and later of Henry County, Virginia. . . . The men were tall and well proportioned, athletic and powerful, healthy and persevering, their powers unabated to old age; their women, not beautiful, but magnificently handsome; the men intelligent, roving in disposition, born fighters and utterly ignorant of fear." He then mentions General Martin as, perhaps, their best type and representative. It was of this great-grandfather that A.T.R. was "enormously proud."

Col. Joseph Martin III (1785-1859), son of the state-builder, was a man of quieter type, but made of the same fine stuff. Joseph III carried on the family good name. He was a country gentleman and planter, was member of the Virginia Assembly in 1809, and of the constitutional convention of 1829-30. This was the grandfather of Dr. Robertson who speaks of him with admiration: . . . "Whose Gladstonian features could grace the walls of any British country seat."

## CHAPTER II

### YOUNGER YEARS

#### FAMILY HOMES

Our earthly lives and memories are bound up with *places*. It could not be otherwise, we being of the earth and earthly. Even Jesus, when weeping over Jerusalem and its inhabitants, mentions the "*house desolate*" and the "*stones*" of the city. His love and grief encompassed the *place* as well as the *people* of his beloved nation's capital. So it was with Dr. Robertson. He loved certain places with devoted love.

*Belmont* was the second home of Gen. Joseph Martin, on Leatherwood Creek of Patrick County, Virginia, near to the home of Patrick Henry. It was built at the close of the Revolutionary War and was the center from which the members of this branch of the Martin family went forth. Only two tall chimneys remain of this fine old homestead. It was here that Col. Joseph Martin was born, and from here in 1810 he carried his young bride to *Greenwood* in the adjoining county of Henry. This was the family-home of Grandmother Martin that the three-year-old Archie visited.

The *Thompson Robertson Home*, built some time in the first half of the last century, within a few miles of Chatham, still stands. Speaking of his grandfather, Thompson Robertson, A.T.R. says: "I never knew Grandfather Robertson, for

he, like Grandfather Martin, died before I was born; but he left a reputation for thrift, industry and nobility of bearing. His epitaph adds to this estimate of the man. His modest two-story frame dwelling still stands near where the store used to be. It was always a pleasant experience for me as a boy to go with others over to the Robertson Store, some three miles from Cherbury—a charming walk over the hills and through the pines. It is a modest enough homestead,<sup>1</sup> and quite devoid of the splendor of Greenwood and Cherbury, but withal a home of solid comfort and abundant hospitality.”

He remembers with special fondness Grandma Robertson, daughter of Crispin Shelton, a good name in Pittsylvania County, who came to live with her son, after the death of her husband which occurred four years before the outbreak of the Civil War.

“She was a dainty and dear old lady of eighty years who lived up-stairs at Cherbury.” She always had a “pleasant word” for the children and a “kindly interest” in their play. He remembers her standing with her black shawl over her shoulders as she watched him building a stick-house, and having “pleasant banter” with him.

He concludes: “My first touch with death was one day when Grandma fell down those perilous stairs.” She lingered only a few days, and was gone. He recalls with vividness

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Robertson must have been thinking of his grandfather's house in after years when it was in a run-down condition. In fact it was far more than a “modest” home, as the specially milled weather-boarding testifies, along with the finely turned banisters of the stairway, and the mantels which members of the family of the Chatham banker were glad in after years to have installed in their colonial home. It may not have possessed the “splendor” of Cherbury, but it was built on the refined and even elegant lines of the period.

"the beautiful Sunday" when the great concourse of neighbors and friends gathered on the lawn "to do reverence to the life of this good woman." That was in 1873, when he was ten years old.

### CHERBURY <sup>2</sup>

It was to Cherbury Cottage, where he was born and where he lived till twelve years of age, that his memory always reverted with tender devotion. To that lovely spot his heart turned during those hard and dreary days of farming in North Carolina in the late seventies, and on through College and Seminary days, and through the years of increasing labors and honors.

Long years after, while studying in the British Museum on the "Big Grammar," he and Mrs. Robertson thought of calling on Lady Astor who was a daughter of his same county. His son writes with pleasant humor and keenness of appreciation of this incident: "I used to think it was awfully funny for Father to be so [interested in] having been born in the same county (Pittsylvania) as Lady Astor. . . . I thought it was so countrified (and of course it was). But don't you see, it wasn't snobbery; it was a vital sense of the past, the link with Cherbury. That was what counted."

It was largely of Cherbury that he wrote in the *Recollections*, dedicated to his "wife and children." He described in full detail "the two-story brick building in the shape of a cross with a long veranda in front, with the two floors and basement rooms"; "the pretty furniture and family por-

<sup>2</sup> Same as the French Cherbourg, meaning "dear town, or borough, or manor house."





CHERBURY, DR. ROBERTSON'S BIRTHPLACE IN PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY,  
VIRGINIA



THE LOUISVILLE HOME ON RAINBOW DRIVE



traits"; the various rooms—"Mother's room" that opened into the greenhouse, and the one upstairs for "Grandma Robertson," the nursery, the library, the kitchen; the "big woodpile," the lawn, the great trees, "the gorgeous rose-bush that took on the proportions of a tree under which we could play," "the office" out on the lawn, the ice-house, the cider-mill, the corn-crib, the family cemetery at the corner of the lawn, the orchard, the bumble-bee nest, the hornets and wasps, and the viper on the veranda that nearly scared him to death.

He wrote a special paragraph on his mother's lovely flower garden and added: "It was a habit of my childhood to run into the garden before breakfast and bring mother a white rose." Nor could he fail to write of "the spring" which furnished "water that was cold and fine and in great abundance" for the household. It was not a poetic matter for him, however, for as the number of servants declined it fell to him to be the water-boy, and the spring was several hundred yards from the house and "the bucket grew very heavy." It is in touching vein that he wrote of "the spring": "Many a night in later years have I dreamed of taking the gourd cup and quaffing a long drink of water from this dear spring, which was to me a spring of Bethlehem indeed."

He concluded this section with a description of "The Quarters" for the slaves, consisting of two rows of houses. After the Emancipation these houses were "the quarters" of the servants who remained. One of them in that later period was occupied by the overseer and farmhands. But most of them became vacant. For a while, however, a few of the ex-slaves remained and worked the plantation. But most of

the vast acres grew up in broom sedge and "old field pines" for lack of money and hands. In this post-bellum period one of the houses of "the quarters" was used for a while as a "free school," which A.T.R. had hazy recollections of attending. The question of the education of the rising generation was a tragic one in those trying Reconstruction days.

Reverting to "the quarters" he said: "There was to me a strange medley of emotions about the negroes. I had my Negro Mammy who was kind and good to me." After freedom the young negroes took up a new attitude toward the whites, while the older generation retained "a tone of dignity and courtesy." But all, both old and young, "stepped around respectfully in the presence of my Father and Mother, whom they still called 'Marsta' and 'Missus.'" He tells of an old negro, who lived on the knoll near the Big House, who used to recite the stories of "Bre'r Fox," and often played an accompaniment on the banjo. One by one all the negroes left but a handful. The old days were gone forever, and Cherbury became little more than a happy memory. He could not forget the "hooting owl" that came and sat under his window at night, "right on the roof of the greenhouse" and hooted his "Hoo, hoo, hoo!" *right at him*, as he thought. "Whereat," he says, "I tucked my head completely under the cover." He loved mocking-birds, though he feared the cooing of the doves in the distance which "sounded like the wail of the lost." The howling of the dogs at night, also, filled him with dread, because the negroes had told him it was the sign of the death of someone.

Cherbury was a hospitable home. He recorded: "I have childish memories of many visitors who came and went

through the years. I would slip in and out of the parlor." He recalls especially the visits of Drs. J. B. Jeter, W. E. Hatcher, and A. B. Brown, and adds: "I shall never forget a white-haired Episcopal minister, who one day stopped upon the front porch, as he left home, and patted me on the head, saying that he hoped I would be a preacher. It made a lasting impression on my life."

He had the common experience of disillusionment when in later years, after labors more abundant and with honors impending, he returned to Cherbury with wife and children. He was surprised and disappointed to see that the house was smaller than it used to be. Speaking of this visit, he says that Cherbury "has always seemed the sweetest spot on earth. Literally hundreds of nights through the years I have dreamed that I was there a child again, happy and care-free and joyous."

#### FORMATIVE INFLUENCES

Of the members of his own immediate family there were four who had special significance for A.T.R. personally and for his life's career. He describes each in loving detail—*Father, Mother, Brother Martin, and Sister Josephine*, whose images should rise before us, even though dimly. They were among those who rose superior to the testings of those trying times.

##### *His Father*

Dr. John Robertson (1825-1914) was the only surviving son of Thompson Robertson. He began life with bright prospects. He was well educated for his times—in Academy,



Washington College and Jefferson Medical College, Baltimore. He inherited considerable wealth in lands and slaves. He was able to build Cherbury which "was generally considered the prettiest place in the country."

To this new and handsome country seat he brought his bride, the lovely Ella Martin of Greenwood in Henry County, daughter of "state-builders." They were blessed with ten children, five sons and five daughters. Life looked fair for the young couple. They began life together in 1852, a little less than a decade before the storm of civil strife broke over them.

Young Dr. John Robertson settled down as a planter and a country physician. The plantation was at first managed by an overseer, later by Martin, John's oldest surviving son. As to his father's standing in his profession, Dr. Robertson writes: "I have been told that my father was an excellent physician and was much sought after all the country round." But disappointment, even tragedy, awaited the country physician. He was thrown from his horse while making one of his rounds and his leg was so badly broken that when it healed it was shorter than the other, making him lame for life. To this was added later a physical infirmity which made mounting and dismounting from a horse practically impossible. So, to his sorrow and that of his family, he was compelled to give up the practice of medicine. Had the day of automobiles and good roads arrived in time, how different would have been the life of Dr. John Robertson.

In due time came Emancipation and Appomattox and Reconstruction. A.T.R. wrote, not bitterly but sadly: "As I came to notice life about me I found myself in a home of

beauty and sadness. My earliest memories of my Father are associated with financial struggle."

John Robertson, like all men, was a child of his times. He was brought up in comfort and ease. For him money came without struggle. He did not have to "work his way" through college or medical school. He had lived as a gentleman; built a lovely home and settled down as a gentleman. As a gentleman he had married one of the most lovely and intelligent young women in all that region. He began life without financial cares. He, doubtless, had the complacency and assurance of all his contemporaries who were certain that all things would continue as they had been. He owned a large number of slaves and fifteen hundred acres of land. So money came easily and doubtless went easily. He had a beautiful family growing up about him. What more could a man wish for?

He and his neighbors could not imagine that the Confederate Cause could lose. John Robertson's wife was so loyal and sure of the outcome that only a few weeks before Appomattox, when the Confederacy was already lost, she gave all her silver plate to the government.

Instead of being canny and thrifty like Thompson Robertson, his father, John used his income from the plantation and his medical practice for unwise investments and allowed his annual accounts and other debts to pile up without worrying about them. But, poor man, he knew nothing about making debts in inflated currency and paying them in hard coin. He was not alone. Many a neighbor and Southerner had done the same thing. After Appomattox, Confederate money was hardly worth the pulp of which it was

made. Consequently these accumulated debts, made for the running expenses of the home, which might easily have been paid in the same currency in which and when they were made, must now be paid in U. S. currency. That was John Robertson's Appomattox!

True he had a large and valuable plantation; but that meant capital for running expenses and labor which demanded even more. He had no money for either, but debts instead. The interest on his debts and the broom sedge on his plantation grew side by side. The catastrophe was inevitable—bankruptcy!

Dr. John Robertson was a good man, a godly man. In the days of his opulence he had given a thousand dollars toward the building of the Chatham Baptist Church. Now he could scarcely spare a thousand cents. In his new North Carolina home-town he was one of the organizers of the Baptist Church. Amid trials he held on to religion. Though the iron of disappointment, disillusion, and frustration must have entered his very soul, he did not surrender. The son wrote: "But he did not despair. He was always an optimist. He toiled on, and we toiled on. We were not alone in our lot. All our neighbors were caught in the same predicament. Nearly all of them had to sell out and move to other regions." . . . He adds sadly that in those days "the cloud hung over my little head."

In spite of all, Dr. John Robertson "persevered and came to find fresh joy in life in new environments" and lived to a good old age. His grandson, A.T.R., Jr., writes interestingly and significantly from the standpoint of the third generation. He says: "I've always admired Grandfather

Robertson's pluck; and there was never any whining in the family that I remember, and no harking back to what might have been." He adds: "Don't you think it interesting that Grandfather Robertson, a bankrupt ex-planter and North Carolina dirt-farmer, was the founder of the Farmers' Union (the most liberal of the national farm organizations now) in his new home? Well, in a way, I'm a fan on the subject of the Robertsons as an example of a Southern family which was smashed by the Civil War and took it! If we get smashed again during this one, I pray we may be able to do as well!"

### *His Mother*

"The women [were] not beautiful, but magnificently handsome." So wrote Professor Weeks in his description of the Martin women. But he was speaking in general, and not in particular of Ella Martin, A.T.R.'s mother, for she was more than "handsome." Her lovely face has been preserved for us and shines forth from the old oil portrait which hangs in the home of a granddaughter and namesake. It is a face reminiscent of the dear and happy ante-bellum days at Cherbury, of unusual sweetness, beauty, and high intelligence. Two photographs, taken in later years, after the ravages of time and trials, combine the two descriptions: one, in spite of wrinkles, recalls the smiling sweetness and beauty of young womanhood; the other, with the face in repose, shows the handsomeness and strength of the Martin women, touched with "the plaintive sadness" which the son remarks.

"Archer is a fine babe, with large blue eyes and a wide

mouth . . ." So wrote his mother in her Diary, January 3, 1864, of her two-months-old baby boy, who was her fourth son and her seventh child. There were three more to follow. She was thirty-five years old.

"I was in the thick of the nursery life," he wrote, "and my mother had little time for spoiling me. She loved each of the children in a special way, and each of us thought he was the favorite. I was sure I was, though why, I have no idea, except that I was a delicate child, and probably caused her a great deal of care."

Ella Martin Robertson was the daughter of Colonel Joseph Martin of Greenwood and was of a family of eight daughters and one son. A.T.R. wrote: "They were all gifted, but I always felt that my mother had the rarest mind of them all." This is quite credible to anyone who has read her Diary, or her letters in later life to her distinguished son. He said of her: "She loved books and was ambitious for her children to excel." The Diary (1850-1864) shows her to have been a woman of unusual literary gifts, of a poetic turn of mind, and of the deepest and finest sensibilities. In her earlier years she was much given to introspection, as was the manner of those times, and we shall come to see this same trait also in her son, even at the age of thirty.

Mother Robertson was a deeply pious woman, daughter of a godly father to whom she was passionately devoted. Broken-heartedly she wrote: "My Father, my venerable, noble, aged, idolized Father—is dead"; and she mentions his impressive prayer upon her arrival at his bedside. On the second anniversary of his death she wrote: "I always feel nearer to him when I am more earnest in my endeavors



after holiness." That unusual phrase, while being a strong testimony to her father's piety, is deeply self-revealing of her own. The son writes: "She was deeply religious in heart and loved the highest poetry and endeavored to keep the torch ablaze in very difficult times."

She was a strong Southerner, and therein was very human. She was "loyal to the Confederacy," and sacrificed for it to the very last. She describes the pre-war excitement and the "signs and indications of the coming of this revolution that is upon us now," and speaks feelingly of the stirring events of 1860 in connection with the election of Lincoln to the Presidency. Her Revolutionary Martin blood grew hot as she wrote as a true daughter of Dixie: "I am thankful that I am living now, for already I feel the pure blood of my ancestors bounding in my veins. . . . I would be strong, I would be good. Oh! I would be great to serve my bleeding country; but alas! alas! What am I—a woman . . . who can do nothing but watch and wait and pray?" For Ella Martin Robertson the unbelievable happened! The Confederacy went down in defeat, and with it her beautiful, idyllic life. War and its consequences, like a broom, swept clean away well-nigh everything of an earthly nature that she loved—Cherbury, her flower garden, the plantation, a life without worry, ease, plenty, servants, friends of culture and refinement, clothes, pictures, furniture—all the things that ante-bellum civilization gave to the fortunate—all swept away! She was a victim of her times. With slavery was swept away the civilization based thereon. That she was a victim—that she was not responsible for wrongs to be righted—did not make it less difficult for her and her generation.

When all, or nearly all, was gone, like the mother of the Gracchi, she turned with renewed devotion to her own and real jewels—*her children*. In her new North Carolina home, with a sure instinct she turned to her adolescent son of promise. He said: "I have always felt that my mother made her deepest mark upon my life at Statesville, N. C., when she sought to guide me in the budding days of aspiration, when I felt the strange yearning after learning that was to fill so large a part of my life. . . . She became my confidante and inspirer and understood me when no one else did. I shall always be grateful to God that He let her live long enough to see her hopes, and mine to some extent, realized, and to make it possible for me to brighten her last years, in some ways at any rate." He adds with evident and natural pride: "She was a woman of culture and refinement and was at home in any circle." Ella Martin could wear silk or calico with equal grace and ease, though it is duly recorded that she "clung to the silks and satins as long as they lasted, but when poverty came wore proudly enough the calicoes and blacker hues. . . . But she did not complain. She found her joy in the new life that came to us." She lived to her seventy-second year, long enough to see her baby boy with "large blue eyes" grow to manhood and honored by scholars in all the five continents.

### *Martin*

John Martin Robertson, oldest brother of A.T.R., was a luminous example of one who deliberately sacrifices himself for the good of his family.

The slaves were gone. The father was incapacitated, the

younger sons were thirteen, twelve, and six years old respectively, while Martin was twenty-one. There were two courses presented to him—to leave home and seek a career in the West, or elsewhere, as so many of his friends did; or stay by the family and manage what had been saved from the wreck and make a living for father, mother, and eight children. He decided on the latter course. For more than a generation he was the principal support and the economic head of the Robertson family. Fortunately in his later years this economic strain was removed, and life became more comfortable.

A.T.R. has left to his family and the world this beautiful and moving appreciation of a brother who stepped aside and bore the burden while his younger brother climbed the heights of world fame. These words were written while Martin was still with his family:

“He is one of the noblest of men, and was for a generation the mainstay of our family. I can never repay the debt that I owe him, for he made possible my education and my whole career, such as it is under God, by his devotion to family life. I have never in my life seen a finer self-renunciation than Martin showed for the sake of his Father and Mother, his brothers and sisters. It is easy enough to say that it was duty, but it was duty at the cost of his own education and at the loss of a family of his own. . . . He was gifted, manly, handsome, noble, capable of becoming anything that he wished, if he could have gone on with his education and [improved] his opportunity. . . . I love him with reverence and devotion. May God give him the best and holiest mercies now and always!” He added: “He was my boyhood’s hero,

and he was and is a hero in the true sense of loyalty to duty."

### *Josephine*

"My baby sleeps, my sweet little Josephine lies in unconscious security, for God is her Keeper." So wrote the youthful and deeply pious mother as she commended her first little daughter, at night when asleep, to God. Later she confided to her diary: "Yet Josephine is my favorite. I tremble as I write it. Yet it is so. There is a strange charm about the child, a strength of character and depth of feeling combined with the happiest humor and quickness. . . . To me . . . she is the most remarkable child I ever saw. . . . Sometimes she is certainly beautiful beyond anything I ever imagined."

A.T.R. was seven years younger than Josephine. He recalls the popularity of his sister when the yard at Cherbury was filled with the horses of her admirers on Sunday afternoons. In after years Dr. Robertson told his daughter: "When your Aunt Josephine was sixteen she was the belle of the whole county."

According to the custom of the day she studied under governesses. She was highly intelligent and was well educated for her age and time. A.T.R. recalls Josephine and her sister Nell sitting in the dining-room by the fire in their hooped skirts. She was blonde "with golden hair, Scotchy to the bone," as her brother remarks.

Such was Josephine when the blow fell and they had to move from the beloved Cherbury—beautiful, young, attractive, beloved of family and admired of friends, with pretty

silks and satins and everything a young girl could wish for, all of which pointed to a prosperous life and home and family of her own in the coming years. But it was not to be. It is evident that, like her older brother, she faced squarely the family tragedy—an invalid mother and father, and a family of six smaller children to be cared for—and she made her deliberate life decision: She would never marry; she would sacrifice her own life to the interests of her loved ones.

For one year she kept a diary. Her niece, speaking of it, says: "There are sighs and repinings on each page and reasons enough for them, but—there is also much courage and determination to make the best of everything, which makes this little book a treasury of grit!"

After the family had moved from Virginia to North Carolina, Josephine took up her new labors and adjusted herself to the new situation. In January, 1877, she says: "I wrote for a cloak pattern today by which we hope to remodel our waterproofs. . . . I have been busy washing all day, and will dry the clothes indoors." On January 7th: "Sweet Sabbath day of rest and beauty! Blessed pause in the wearying cares of this world, when we turn our hopes and thoughts from earth to heaven. . . . I read and sang and enjoyed the Sabbath rest very much. Nell and I gazed on the beauties of the departing day with great delight." (She was twenty.) On the 11th she writes: "I repaired two easy chairs in the morning and this afternoon heard the children's lessons." January 16th: "I have spent most of the day with soap-suds, washtubs, and boilers." January 21st: "Too unpleasant for us to attend church this morning. I feel very



much cut off from the Sabbath privileges out here.<sup>3</sup> I have read, and enjoyed my rest very much." January 24th: "Mother has not been well today. . . . I am all the time wishing I could make her more comfortable. . . . Our life is so quiet and monotonous here." January 27th: "The lovely blue sky, the glorious sunshine, the varied and beautiful tints of the twilight, the wonderful splendor of the moon and stars have made this a pleasant day to think of. I nearly finished Nell's cloak." January 26, 1878: "Sallie Jane sent us a magazine. It is full of helpful suggestions for those of us who are trying to make homes in this hard day." February 14th: "Mrs. Boone called on us today. I think her a sensible, Christian woman, which I think a great deal to say of any one." February 23rd: "I spent the day making picture-frames. Our parlor walls are so bare and unfinished. . . . Nell found a few leaves of 'Shirley' by Charlotte Brontë which I am sure I shall enjoy reading very much as I am a great admirer of the author." March 20th: "I have been working on an old dress that by cleaning, turning and remodelling I hope to make as good as new." April 23rd: "We got some chromos and engravings . . . quite an addition to our little parlor." May 5th: "I read some of Tennyson's poetry at night. . . ."

After a year Josephine closed her diary, saying: "I do not know that I will ever keep another diary." She relented just once. On February 28, 1878, she wrote her last entry after the marriage of her beloved sister Nell: "I have been so constantly employed as not to think how lonely I am."

<sup>3</sup> Josephine never was fully reconciled to being exiled from her beloved Virginia, and was delighted when her niece went to college in Richmond.

So on through the years, even for seventy-eight long years, she lived her fine, noble, self-sacrificing life, beloved by her family and honored by her friends. To lay down one's life by dying is, indeed, as Our Lord said, the greatest proof of one's love. But to live long and sacrificially for others is sometimes scarcely less nobly heroic.

There were other family influences. The family as a group, big ones helping little ones, all stood together. Two younger brothers, Eugene and John, helped with the endless wood-cutting and other heavy chores on the farm. An older sister, Nell, was married early, and soon had a large family of her own. She seldom returned for visits, but was never absent from the thoughts and affections of the family circle. Anna-belle, the youngest child, was a gay and winsome little girl with bright eyes and a quick smile. Though little was written of the sister Maud, nearest and dearest to her brother Archie, her influence on his younger years was perhaps greater than that of any other member of the family. To her he may have confided the dreams of which he felt shy to speak even to his understanding mother. The two of them must have had quiet walks through the autumn woods, and talks on summer evenings when the day's work was done.

#### RECONSTRUCTION DAYS

"I did not know the pinch of war," Dr. Robertson relates in his journal, "nor do I recall the early days of the reconstruction period. Virginia suffered more during the shock of war than any other of the States, but probably less during the days of Negro supremacy than was true of the states south of her."

As the family of Dr. John Robertson, broken in fortune, turned their backs on the Old Dominion, the land of their sires, the state of their birth, their love and their pride, they went out, in a sense like Abram of old, not knowing to what they went. All the joys and comforts of gentle refined living were left behind. They felt that the end of their world had come, which indeed was the truth. The dear old days could never come back again. But with uncomplaining courage they went forward and took up life again under new and strange and hard circumstances.

Yet, perhaps they did not realize that they were moving into a state with a noble history whose people were animated with a state pride which they in due time would come to share. The people of North Carolina, in spite of their own sorrows and hardships and cruel disillusionments of the times, received the Robertson Clan with kindness and hospitality.

On September 1, 1875, Dr. John Robertson took his wife, older daughters and little ones, eight souls in all, from Cherbury to Statesville, N. C., some one hundred and fifty miles distant, where he had bought a farm. The two older boys, Martin and Eugene, were left behind to harvest the crop of corn and tobacco. "Archer," as his mother called him, could never forget this experience which was "one of the saddest memories" of his early life—the selling and leaving his beloved Cherbury. Years later, he wrote: "As we passed into the woods I took a last look at the home of my heart." During the forty years that followed he saw his beloved birthplace only rarely.

It was a leap in the dark, as he says, but it turned out to

be a fortunate one. Philosophizing about it, he remarks: "One of the blessings of life is that we do not see all the way. My own career, such as it is, seems to be due to this decision of my Father to come to Statesville, where our troubles greatly increased; but God drew near."

Dr. Robertson's namesake also comments with sympathetic understanding and expert knowledge on the family history and "dirt farming," as he calls it. He speaks of his grandfather's experience in North Carolina as "interesting" and similar to that of many other American families; and when comparing the land of one of the family groups living on "soil [which] seems to be washing pretty badly," with the well-tended acres of Cherbury, he exclaims: "Soils and men, Dr. Gill, *soils and men!*" This I take to refer to the newly emphasized historical fact that civilizations rise and decline with the soils they live upon. Like soil, like people. Hugh Bennett (quoted by Jonathan Daniels) says: "Good soil does underlie good life."

The Robertsons of Virginia had moved from a well-developed plantation on to a farm in North Carolina that had to be carved out of the native woodlands. Clearing out forests and then cultivating the stumpland is enough to test the physical stamina and moral fiber of any man or group. But the Robertson family began their new and difficult life with "brave hearts and high hopes."

An accentuated case of State-pride was duly recorded in the *Recollections*. When Martin and Eugene arrived later in Statesville, North Carolina, by wagon (the family had come by train) they were accompanied by "Old Bob," the family dog. Bob sniffed around the first day, took in the

surroundings, turned up his nose, and went back the next day to his beloved Virginia never to return.

Soon after moving into the new home on the farm, the youth, A.T.R., "made some flower-beds for mother on each side of the veranda." But his labors were not confined to flowers, though he loved the flowers of the fields and tried to have a flower garden of his own. Though only thirteen years of age, these labors included the suckering, worming, cutting and curing of tobacco, doing such chores as milking the cows, feeding, harnessing and hitching up the horses, driving the wagon to mill, cutting stove-wood, and the heavier labors of plowing, chopping down trees, splitting rails, sawing logs, building fences and barns, shocking wheat and, finally, doing a real man's work of cutting wheat and oats with a cradle. He used to say in the family circle in later years: "I learned to work, to work hard, and to keep on working."

He was proud to do all this and to work loyally by the side of Martin, his hero-brother. How all this reminds us of the early experiences of many of America's greatest sons! But it was a part of the Plan for him—to see and know life from many angles. He shows no excessive regret at having had to pass through this ordeal and feel the pinch of poverty. He realized that his family were suffering along with thousands of other Southern families. Yes, the Robertsons were "smashed" by the Reconstruction—but "they took it"; and that was what counted. Three years of this grubbing, gruelling work passed, and the lad passed into young manhood. Those were three crucial years on which hung the outcome of all the great years that followed.



First, these years had a political meaning for him. He tells of "the great political campaign of 1876 when the Ku Klux Klan ceased to operate because the period of Negro domination passed with the overthrow of carpet-bag government in the Carolinas." He recalls marching in a torch-light procession for Tilden and Vance, when he "helped to save the country," and adds, referring to the Tilden episode: "We lived on the edge of the volcano, but not over it."

This period had a profound spiritual meaning for the rapidly developing boy. He speaks of his longing for an education "with a great yearning passion." To others such ambition may have seemed ill-timed. Making a living might have seemed more important than making a life. He was blest in having at this crucial time a wise and understanding mother. At the noon hour and after supper he would dig at his grade-school lessons, and his mother would hear them. When in later years, after prodigious and prolonged labors some scholastic honor or position came to him, it was his highest joy to think how much his mother would be pleased and proud.

Then, there was the wise and sympathetic pastor. Rev. J. B. Boone, a North Carolinian, was thirty-nine years old when he came into the life of Archie Robertson. He was prepared for college in Buckhorn Academy under the direction of Captain J. H. Picot, who has been termed "the wizard of education." Mr. Boone entered Wake Forest College in 1860; but the War prevented his completing his work. He entered the Confederate army and was captured in 1863, and remained prisoner to the close of the war. In 1873 he attended an educational meeting in Raleigh where

Dr. Barnas Sears, the great Baptist educator, and at that time agent of the Peabody Fund, made a striking address on the Graded School System. Mr. Boone was deeply impressed. Being a member of the school board of Charlotte he was selected to organize and direct the first graded school in Charlotte.

Two years later he became missionary of the Baptist State Mission Board and began his labors in the very time and territory of the settling of the Robertsons in Statesville. Statesville is a Scotch-Irish community and strongly Presbyterian. When the Robertsons arrived, there was no Baptist church. For three Sundays of the month they attended the Presbyterian church, and the other Sunday attended Baptist services at the Court House conducted by Rev. J. B. Boone. Naturally the missionary-pastor sensed the significance of this new and numerous Baptist family from Virginia, and, along with his wife, felt strongly drawn toward them, especially to Archie. Mr. Boone became a veritable Paul to this young Timothy. Since there were also other Baptists in the community, the missionary-pastor was not slow in organizing a church. It was in connection with a meeting held by Mr. Boone, assisted by Rev. A. C. Dixon, pastor at Asheville (in after years pastor of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, London), that a church was organized with Dr. and Mrs. John Robertson as constituent members. There were some baptisms in a pond at the edge of town, the first in the history of that strong Presbyterian center. The event created great excitement. Archie heard Mrs. McL. tell a neighbor she "had seen the like before," but that "Jeems," her husband, "had never seen the like," *so she was going to let him go!*

Dr. John Robertson not long after was elected Superintendent of the Sunday School and made a deacon. Archie volunteered to act as sexton and ring the bell and took much interest in the Sunday School. Soon the vigorous missionary undertook the building of a house of worship, which was accomplished only by "desperate effort," after a gracious revival meeting.

It was in a meeting held in March, 1876, by Rev. F. M. Jordan that Archie "felt a change of heart," united with the church and was baptized along with his brother Eugene and two older sisters. Baptism by immersion being so new and strange in that community, one of Archie's playmates "mocked" when he was baptized.

Pastor Boone, seeing the interest of young Archie in religious matters, guided him tactfully into leading in public prayer. Finally, one day in January, 1879, he says: "Brother Boone nearly scared me to death by asking if I did not think of preaching." He was deeply stirred by this. The lad, in fact, had thought of such things and secretly had cherished such a hope; but nothing was clear to him; and he was so young! Besides, being a minister meant a college education, and there were no means for that.

Mr. Boone, trained in educational, as well as missionary matters, conceived a very beautiful and Christian plan of helping young Archie prepare for college. It was for Mr. Boone to conduct a school in his own house for young people not attending school, and to give Archie free tuition. This was in the winter of 1878-79. The plan was gladly accepted, and in November of 1878, after the corn was gathered, he began his studies in Latin, Arithmetic, Geography,

and Grammar. When May came, the school desk was laid aside for plowing and other farm work till autumn.

What conflicting emotions must have torn him! Such a plan, it was true, fitted in with his passionate longings, both to get an education and to serve the Lord. But could he desert Martin in his struggle to support the family? Young Archie was indeed entering into his Valley of Decision.

Mr. Boone went straight ahead with his plans. He had Archie attend the Yadkin Association which met with the New Bethany Church on September 7, 1879, and at his suggestion the Association adopted him as their "beneficiary," which meant that board, room, and tuition at Wake Forest College were provided for. Dr. Thomas E. Pritchard, President of Wake Forest, was present and was very kind to the prospective student.

The timid young preacher was made to stand up before the Association. It was learned afterward that one good brother criticized young Robertson for riding his old farm horse, Morgan, rather too fast for a preacher, on his way to the Association. The fact was that Archie was merely trying to stay on the old plow-plug which seemed to be trying to go all the gaits at once.

Long years afterward, when A.T.R. had attained to fame, this honest brother wrote a letter of apology for his criticism, saying, "I have long since taken back my conclusion," and added, "But the lesson is—God can do anything with anybody he chooses." Dr. Robertson replied, heartily agreeing. It is said that others also in those days doubted the wisdom of the selection of the youthful Robertson by the Association. That was not the first nor last time that God's experi-

enced servants misjudged the qualities and qualifications of young ministers who later became highly useful. Who can forget the case of Paul and John Mark?

On October 16, 1879, the Statesville Church licensed him to preach. With all these preparations the Robertson family could not spare one cent to help in Archie's college expenses. It was to them, doubtless, a source of chagrin and regret. Some may even wonder at it; but we must keep in mind the days in this America of ours when all this happened. Beginning with the panic of 1873 on into the early nineties, the whole country was afflicted with industrial and financial distress. The farmers were sorely beset in those unsettled days. Eggs sold at three dozen for a quarter, and other farm products were sold at relatively disastrous prices. Farmers could scarcely get the money necessary for taxes and interest on farm mortgages. A second matter to keep in mind was that Archie's going to college meant a loss in labor for the support of the family, equivalent to hundreds of dollars. No wonder, then, that the Robertson family had to turn Archie loose alone and single-handed in his quest for an education.

Since he had no funds for the journey, the sixteen-year-old ministerial student borrowed ten dollars from a dear friend, a mother in Israel in Statesville, bought a railroad ticket for Wake Forest, and landed there on his birthday, November 6, 1879, with two dollars and a half in his pocket. To his dismay, he shortly after arrival lost fifty cents in the grass—a loss equal to the price of six dozen eggs.



### CHAPTER III

## UNDER THE MAGNOLIAS

Wake Forest is in North Carolina. When the government road-makers planned *National Highway No. 1*, running from Maine to Florida, naturally, from the viewpoint of North Carolinians, they routed it through North Carolina and Wake Forest. It goes right down "Faculty Avenue," and swings round the campus on its way south.

As the annual armies of invasion from the North come streaming down to Florida in the autumn days, and back again in the springtime, many of them trailing their homes behind them, many go thundering through this classic Baptist Athens, not heeding the giant oaks, grand magnolias, lovely crepe-myrtles, mimosas, blooming shrubs, and flowers, while a few stop to admire and enjoy the beauty of the place.

Raleigh, the capital, is sixteen miles from Wake Forest. Durham, the home of Duke University, is twenty-three miles away. Chapel Hill, seat of the State University, is twelve miles farther on. Richmond, Virginia, is four hours from Wake Forest. Wilmington on the coast is distant a morning's run. Manteo and Currituck are within a day's journey. One can breakfast in Wake Forest and have afternoon tea in Charleston, South Carolina. Or, if one prefers the mountains

to the sea, one breakfasts here and can have afternoon coffee in Asheville, and sleep in Cherokee. Such are the miracles made possible by a machinist in Dearborn, Michigan, and the modern road-makers.

But it was not always thus. When Archie Robertson alighted from that slow-moving mixed passenger and freight train of the *Gaston and Raleigh Railroad*, in 1879, Wake Forest was rather far from everywhere.

The history of the Town of Wake Forest (which the citizens, with proud humility, refer to as "the Village") is one with that of Wake Forest College. There is not the usual accentuated conflict between Town and Gown. It all began on a farm in a forest in the year 1834.

The name Wake Forest was given to a rather vast primeval forest extending north of Raleigh in the County of Wake. It was called Forest of Wake, or Wake Forest.

It was in the midst of this richly wooded and attractive section, watered by the Neuse River, that the North Carolina Baptist Convention unanimously resolved in 1832 to purchase a farm of six hundred and twenty-five acres for the sum of \$2,000 for the purpose of founding a school for "young ministers," or "beneficiaries," as they were called, and other young men. This school was to be organized on the manual labor principle, a principle which they hoped would appeal to the practically minded farmers of the land.

The location was highly recommended by the Committee on Education for "its central, convenient and healthful situation . . . the moral and enlightened character of the surrounding population, and . . . the cheapness of living." The

money was quickly provided and the purchase of the farm was made on August 28, 1832.<sup>1</sup>

As soon as possible a committee was appointed by the Convention to take steps to procure a charter for the Institute from the State Legislature, which did not meet, however, till November of the next year, 1833. The bill presented was "to establish a Literary and Manual Labor Institution in the County of Wake."

This bill immediately met with the bitterest opposition from the anti-missionary Baptists. The fight was led by a man of ability, of influence with the masses, of no culture, and of a conscience that seriously needed overhauling. The ignorant, fanatical, untruthful demagoguery of the campaign is almost past belief. The Missionary Baptists, who were founding the Institute, were accused of "plotting the destruction of the country." The preachers educated in such schools, it was asserted, "are ready to rob the poor, drain the coffers of the rich, and are the most dangerous robbers and murderers, and ever ready to cut throats." Such schools, the opponents claimed, were worse than the Spanish Inquisition—the Pope—and "even the sea-serpent." Summing up their accusations against such theological schools, they said: "They have been, are now, and ever will be a curse to the Church of God and the nations of the earth." No literature in modern Europe against the evangelicals exceeds this in virulence.

But, fortunately, the North Carolina State Legislature was guided by men of sanity and culture, and the bill was passed on December 21, 1833. However, the charter was by no

<sup>1</sup> See G. W. Paschal's *A History of Wake Forest College*, 1935.

means ideal. It did not grant authority for conferring degrees. The amount of property, real and personal, was limited to \$50,000. All real estate was subject to taxation; and the charter was to be in force only "twenty years, and no longer."

Wake Forest Institute was opened February 3, 1834. The number of students was limited to fifty boys and young men. Most of them were sons of farmers. The school buildings consisted of the farmhouse, which was occupied by Dr. Wait, the President, and his family, seven cabins for students, and seven cabins for the slaves, besides the barn and other out-houses. The faculty and student body had their meals together. The students studied and worked on the farm.

It may be of interest to note that two other distinguished Southern Baptist Colleges began as manual labor institutions—Mercer University, Georgia, and Howard College, Alabama. But the manual labor idea as the economic basis of a college was a failure, not only here but elsewhere.

Because of a growing opposition to the Institute, as organized, an application for a new charter was made to the State Legislative bodies, and on December 28, 1838, the Institute became Wake Forest College. The Institute had been doing college work for several years, so that Wake Forest College may justly claim to be the oldest college in North Carolina, with the exception of the State University.

But those were far-off days. The half century between the thirties and the eighties of the last century saw an old world go down and a new world emerge. The Mexican War had immensely enlarged our national domain—adding an area

greater than the combined areas of the British Isles, France, Germany and Switzerland. It was an increase of over one half million square miles. In Europe, the French Empire had perished under the heels of the gray-green hordes of Germany. The War Between the States had erased slavery from the land, and the civilization based thereon. A New South was now in the making. King Cotton no longer ruled from the looms of New England, nor Steel from the foundries of Pennsylvania. A new breath was blowing over the Southland. A bruised giant was awaking to new life from the blows that had cast him down. Archie Robertson arrived at Wake Forest and began his career at the dawn of the New Post-bellum American Age.

#### THE CAMPUS

Looking up the gentle slope from the railroad station on the edge of the college property, Archie saw to the west a campus still gashed with red gullies and covered with scrub pines, young oaks and elms. Amid these he saw, facing him, three dignified, even beautiful, brick buildings. *Wait Hall* was the central and oldest of the three, having been built forty-two years before, in 1837. The *Library Building*, erected the year before, in 1878, flanked the central building on the north. To the south was the new *Wingate Memorial Hall*, the Chapel of that day which was finished in that same year, 1879.

We must keep in mind that this was only fourteen years after Appomattox. It was really remarkable that Wake Forest College had emerged from the Civil War free from debt, equipped with three splendid buildings, an endow-



ment of something over \$100,000, and with a student body of one hundred and seventy young men. Six years later, Brown University had only two hundred and forty-eight students, and Johns Hopkins two hundred and seventy-six undergraduates. In 1884 Richmond College had one hundred and fifty-six students, and the Louisville Seminary ninety-five students.

But as Archie walked up the slope he saw no magnolias. They came later, just as he was graduating in 1885. Those one hundred and fifty royal magnolias, with their cereous leaves and flowers, along with the hundred and more of oaks, elms, and shrubs were planned and planted by President Charles E. Taylor. His work has made the campus of Wake Forest widely known as one of the most beautiful in the land. President W. L. Poteat later took great interest in the campus and embellished it. So now, when we wish to discard prose for a moment, we speak of college life at Wake Forest as "Under the Magnolias."

#### "NEWISH" ROBERTSON

It was by this rare title that a new student at Wake Forest, "prep," or freshman, was known to the upper classmen. Through his long life Dr. Robertson was known by various names. His mother and other members of the family in the early days called him "Archer." Later he was known to family and friends as "Archie." To his college intimate friends he was "Arch," and to others, then and later, he was "Robertson," while to other close friends he was "Rob." Some referred to him as "A.T.R.," and one distinguished pastor in Edinburgh, Scotland, addressed him as "A.T."

Later his Seminary students, following the Training School girls, affectionately referred to him as "Doctor Bob," while in his Louisville home, at least to one person, he was "Archibald."

His general characteristics as a student are recalled with some distinctness after these six decades. He is remembered as tall, rather slender, of a clear, even pink, complexion, not tanned as one would expect after recent weeks of sun on the farm. He was usually better dressed than the average student. His manner was pleasant and friendly, though tending to shyness. This, in part, was probably due to a slight hesitancy in speech. But so well did he have this under control that his former fellow-students cannot recall it with distinctness, as some of us do who knew him in Seminary days.

However, he was conscious of it; and his attention being called by the college pastor, Dr. R. T. Vann, to an advertisement of an expert who promised to cure any sort of impediment in speech in three days "for \$25, or your money back," he sought and obtained the necessary fee. To his great surprise and relief he found that his trouble was due to improper breathing and that by inhaling properly and filling the lungs, all trouble would vanish. Experiment proved the expert to be correct. It was only when he would momentarily forget this simple rule, in after years, that the hesitancy would return.

All this, however, did not keep him from winning oratorical honors in college days nor prevent him from becoming an impressive speaker in the classroom and before great assemblies.

THE LITERARY SOCIETIES  
(Euzelian and Philomathesian)

From the first the Literary Societies had held a highly important place in the student-life of Wake Forest College. The Administration had assisted in their organization, had placed at their disposal two adequately spacious halls, had encouraged and co-operated with them for half a century.

These halls, beautifully and even lavishly furnished, were the center of the intellectual, and, in part, the social life of the students. The young men who attained to distinction in their activities usually became distinguished in after years. The rivalry between the Societies became exceedingly strong, and at times bitter.

Immediately upon his arrival, Archie was solicited by both Societies to become a member. Upon the advice of Rev. J. B. Boone he joined the Euzelian Society, of which he soon became a hardworking and honored member.

Society activities included experience with parliamentary rules and methods, drill in English composition in the writing of essays and dissertations, and training in public speaking by means of declamations and orations on special occasions and in the Inter-Society contests.

But the heart of all this intellectual and literary work was *the debate*. Every type of subject was discussed—historical, political, moral, casuistical, and religious, if not too polemical. A former fellow-student recalls that Archie, in time, became a dangerous opponent in debate, not only because of his superior intellectual powers, but because he worked hard and was always prepared.

One means of stimulating these activities were the Society libraries which were at the disposal of the members, in addition to the growing college library. Great was the excitement when new consignments of books arrived. The members would crowd about, like children, and eagerly handle and fondle the precious volumes.

Dr. G. W. Paschal, college historian, says: "The Societies . . . in so far as they were able, [provided] their members with a training in English composition which was not given in the regular collegiate classes either at Wake Forest or elsewhere." In after years the training given by Society work was provided for in the regular college curriculum, so that the principal *raison d'être* of the Societies disappeared, and they waned in numbers and importance.

Besides the cultural training in English, dialectics and public speaking, the Societies co-operated with the college administration in such practical matters as the care of the dormitories and the oversight of certain sanitary regulations.

Archie Robertson is an illustration and evidence of the really great service rendered by the Literary Societies of Wake Forest College. Indirect proof of his ability as a writer, as co-editor of the *Wake Forest Student*, is furnished by the comment of the *Religious Herald* of Richmond, Virginia, in its issue of January 3, 1885: "Of all the College papers published in this country (and the writer has seen most of them) there are few equal to this one and none superior to it." The *Cleveland New Era* referred to it as "the best College magazine published in this country."

Those were the days of sectional and inter-state pride and rivalries which at times resulted in the wounding of the

finer sensibilities of men, and which were altogether unfortunate and unworthy. This is illustrated by the good-natured and double-edged gibe, ascribed to Senator Vance and popularized by Irvin Cobb, that the "State of North Carolina is a Vale of Humility lying between two Peaks of Pride," which is only a humorous response to what others may say of Tar Heels. Naturally those days have long since passed. They remind one of the Englishman's self-deprecative way of expressing his pride of race when he says that his country usually "muddles through." The word "muddles" points to his humility (!) and "through" to his pride.

In his "Anniversary Oration," entitled "Rip Van Winkle Awake at Last," upon the occasion of the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the Literary Societies of Wake Forest College, delivered February 13, 1885, in his senior year, young Robertson spoke eloquently and with deep feeling of this evil. We quote at length from this youthful oration, not only because of its merit, but because it was symptomatic of the period, and at the same time indicated how in ten years the youth had become so thoroughly a North Carolinian, though underneath he always remained so devotedly a Virginian.

He said: "A shrug of the shoulder and a contemptuous sneer express the opinion of many about Tar Heels. . . . A Northern writer recently suggested the propriety of sending missionaries hither just as to other heathen countries. . . . The memory of the brave spirits who met in solemn conclave in Charlotte on May 20, 1775, who struck the first blow for freedom and against tyranny, and who unfurled the flag of American liberty to the breeze . . . is sufficient



refutation of the charge of cowardice. A thousand battlefields reeking with the blood of our heroes attest bravery, courage and heroism in her sons. . . .

"King's Mountain is a monument to her fame more enduring than marble. . . . It was the glory of Old Bute that she was tainted by no Tories. . . .

"When the bugle note was sounded and the drum beat to the tune of Dixie, the sons of North Carolina marched boldly to the fray. . . . On that sad April morning at Appomattox a North Carolina company was the last to surrender, sticking like a Tar Heel to the last.

"Then when a cloud of despair hung loweringly over our prostrate Southland, old men silvered for the grave, and fair-haired maidens, and matrons leading their children, joined hands with battle-scarred veterans, linked their fortunes together, nerved themselves against misfortune and peered through the gloom into the future, hoping for a better day. . . . Moreover, for genuine hospitality, frankness, honesty, and integrity, North Carolinians are unsurpassed. Pure, unsophisticated and generous to a fault, the majority of Tar Heels ought to be proud of themselves and their State."

Such was the tribute of a son of the "Mother of Presidents," proud of his Virginia lineage, to the state of his adoption, his love and his pride.

In his oration he was honest and patriotic enough to point to certain evidences of "Rip Van Winkleism," as he called it, or backwardness, in the life of the state and people. In this same speech he set forth in glowing terms the possibilities of progress of his people in the coming days.

Irvin Cobb, laying aside his humor in his brochure, "North Carolina" (1924), says: "I proclaim these things, namely, that North Carolina today is the foremost State of the South in material progress, in public spirit, in educational expansion and optimism of outlook." The dreams of the young prophet of Wake Forest have already been fulfilled, for, from "Cherokee to Currituck" and from "Murphy to Manteo" the "Old North State" has led her Southern sisters in the attainments of civic greatness.

This almost unprecedented growth of North Carolina was implicit in and is largely accounted for by the interesting and significant racial mixture of her children. Beginning with the predominantly Anglo-Saxon element as a basis, there were added the pure Scottish immigrants who came after the Battle of Culloden in 1746 and settled on Cape Fear. To these were added Germans from Pennsylvania, and Moravians from their "Bethlehem" in the same state led by their Count Zinzendorf (1766) who founded their own "Salem" in Forsyth County. From Charleston, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania came also many Scotch-Irish. From all this dependable, virile, and sturdy stock it was inevitable that a great people should come.

In close connection with the Literary Societies, for a decade, the College Medals provided the most powerful stimulus to the intellectual life of the student-body. There were three of them: The Whitfield Latin Medal, the Silcox Greek Medal, and the Montague French Medal.

For a decade these medals were the center around which herculean labors were piled and bitter rivalries raged. Members of the Societies would urge on their champions to

greater effort, so that some would fortify themselves with strong coffee and prolong their labors into the early hours of morning. The excitement aroused over these feats of the human mind was, however, but a feeble prophecy of the enthusiasm in the athletic bowls of later days.

Of college sports of those days there is nothing much to record. Baseball was rising on the national horizon and making a beginning in college life. Besides this, quoits, roller-skating, and walking were the "favorite exercises." This was before the big shift of emphasis in American college life from the feats of the mind to those of the body. Only the future can judge as to the wisdom of the shift.

#### SIX COLLEGE YEARS

Archie had not had the advantage of a full academy or high school course. The school of Rev. J. B. Boone had helped, but the lack had to be made up by a longer stay at college.

He entered two months late in 1879, that is, on November 6th, his birthday, instead of September 1st. Those were the days of few subjects and thorough work. His first studies were Freshman Latin, Preparatory Greek, and Algebra. By hard work he caught up with his classes by the end of the year. One of his former fellow-students made this illuminating observation that Archie, though arriving late that first year, soon led his class in Greek because of his "meticulous observation and a marvelous memory." Naturally these are the gifts that are the basis of all great and accurate scholarship.

The first year of 1879-80 was a hard one financially. He

writes laconically: "Was very needy as regards money this year. Managed to get on by stinting greatly." He showed his mettle as a student in that first vacation on the farm (1880) when he read the first Book of the Anabasis "so as to be well up in Greek" in the next session.

During the following session (1880-1) he began more definitely his brilliant career as a student by leading his classes. Again in the summer of 1881, while at home on the farm, he taught a Sunday-School class in the afternoon for the Y.M.C.A. In the session of 1881-2 he surprised even himself at his success as a student, winning the Latin Medal.

The vacation of 1882 was again spent on the farm. He preached for his home-church at Statesville one Sunday night, and several times in other churches. This was the summer of his great sorrow in the loss by typhoid of his favorite sister, Maud, his chum, a lovely girl of seventeen. This was the first death in the family since the death of Grandmother Robertson, nine years before. He grieved for his sister. He wrote: "I miss her yet through all the years."

His friends in Statesville again helped him with loans for college expenses for the next session. Upon his return to Wake Forest, Mr. F. M. Purefoy, the godly merchant and Baptist leader, became his good friend and enabled him to be well dressed during the rest of his college days. This good man waited for years till Archie could repay the loans.

During this year he suffered several severe attacks of biliousness and was skilfully and generously attended by Dr. Powers, another good Wake Forest friend.

It was during the winter of 1882 that the Robertson family removed from Statesville to their new farm near Cool

Spring, North Carolina, eleven miles away. The summer of 1883 was a digression from his usual summer work. This vacation was spent preaching in Salisbury with his dear friend, Rev. J. B. Boone. The session of 1883-4 was uneventful and full of hard work. At Commencement he was honored by being made Marshal. For the first time in nine years he returned to visit Cherbury and the scenes of his childhood. He greatly enjoyed meeting his old friends and playmates, especially Hunt Hargrave.

In the autumn of 1884 he returned for his sixth and last year of college life. It was his best and most brilliant year. He was made Senior Editor of the *Wake Forest Student* for the Euzelian Society. He was Euzelian orator on the occasion of the semi-centennial of the Society, when he delivered his oration: "Rip Van Winkle Awake at Last." He also won the French Medal. He was Valedictorian of his class in recognition of the highest scholarship, and received the two degrees of A. B. and A. M. His grades during the year hovered between 98 and 100. Upon his graduation he was invited to occupy the chairs of Latin and of French, after further university training.

He failed by a hair's breadth of winning the most prized honor of all—the Greek Medal. Without doubt this was the keenest disappointment of his college days, and left its impress on his whole life. His Greek professor had carefully trained him. His fellow-Euzelians had "rooted" for him and "banked" on him. He had given himself unstintedly to this great task and had gone far beyond the requirements of the curriculum in Greek. He had read most of Homer, Xenophon, Thucydides, Herodotus, Aeschylus, Euripides, Demos-



thenes, Lysias, Plato, and some of Aristophanes. Greek, he says, had become a "joy" to him. Not only did his Greek professor, Dr. Royall, wish his brilliant student to win, but probably thought he had won. The contest being so close, the professor turned over the examination papers to another Greek scholar to make the decision.

Archie, in fact, almost ruined his health that last year by his prodigious labors. He was scarcely able to take his examinations. When the contest was over, his student-friends, led by Thomas Dixon,<sup>2</sup> made loud and vigorous protests against the award; but to no avail.

Writing of this episode thirty years later, Dr. Robertson said: "It was hard for me to be reconciled to the decision. It's all right now. I do not need the medal. . . . I have never regretted the work I did for the Greek Medal. Without knowing it I was laying the foundation for my future life-work." When he entered the Louisville Seminary he took Senior Greek the first year, and two years later began as Greek instructor under Dr. John A. Broadus.

It seems certain that his very disappointment in failing to win the Greek Medal was the spur that incited him to his indomitable determination of later years to excel in New Testament scholarship. His failure was a stepping-stone to higher achievement.

The imponderables of life are in reality the most weighty of all in worth and importance. Standing, so to speak, on the side-lines, and reviewing and judging this surpassingly

<sup>2</sup> Forty years later, after having attained to national fame as author of *Leopard's Spots* and *The Clansman*, Thomas Dixon wrote Dr. Robertson: "It still makes me mad that poor ——— got the Greek medal! It seems but yesterday!"

interesting man, we reach conclusions and make judgments of which he himself might not have approved.

Had one asked him: "What period of six years in your life meant more for your career and work than any like period?", recalling those days of the prodigious labors of his mind—of those forty-five books, and the "Big Grammar"—who can say what his answer would have been? But to us it is as clear as noon-day that those years at Wake Forest were the most tremendous six years of his whole career. He entered Wake Forest College at the age of sixteen "poorly prepared," as he said. When he was graduated in June, 1885, he was an accomplished scholar in Latin, Greek, and French, and other branches of learning. His grades during his senior year were practically perfect. After some further work in a university, he could have returned to his Alma Mater as professor with brilliant prospects.

He was only twenty-two years old! All of his amazing after-achievements in scholarship were only the blossoming of the stalk that had been planted, watered, and tended with such enormous care and labor during those six years.

Putting aside the alluring offers of professorship in his Alma Mater, he went forward to his life's work. He wanted to be a preacher; and he became one of the great expository preachers of his day, and the teacher of six thousand preachers. The over-strained student and disappointed youthful Hellenist, naturally, did not know all that.

He refused the summer pastorate at Charlotte, N. C., where he would have been amid pleasant and restful surroundings, and gave himself to missionary labors in the Liberty Association where he held seven meetings. However,

during the first part of the summer he suffered from chills and fever, to cure which he went for a two weeks' stay in the highlands of Western North Carolina with a friend. It was his first experience in the mountains and it made a deep impression on him. He returned to his work and threw himself into evangelistic meetings. He speaks of it as "a great experience"; and "many souls were converted."

The summer over, with spirits refreshed, outlook broadened, and purse replenished, but with physical powers still unduly strained, he turned his face toward the Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, and his great life's work.

## CHAPTER IV

### SEMINARY STUDENT DAYS

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary grew out of the inaugural address of Dr. James Petigru Boyce when he was inducted into the chair of theology in Furman University, Greenville, South Carolina, in 1855. It was becoming generally agreed upon that there should be a common theological seminary to serve the Baptists of all the Southern States. In his address he urged three principles of theological education: 1) that such an institution provide courses of training and study for men of different degrees of preparation; 2) that, at the same time, it offer the highest training and opportunity for research work for men properly prepared and desirous to do graduate work; 3) that a carefully drawn statement of beliefs be prepared to which every professor must subscribe when inaugurated.

Four years later (1859) such a Seminary was founded in Greenville, with the above name. It was closed during the Civil War, and reopened in 1865 with a faculty of four—Boyce, Broadus, Manly and Williams—and eight students. These four men, though young, had already distinguished themselves. Boyce was a member of a prominent Charleston family and already a theological professor; Broadus was “the idol of Virginia Baptists”; Manly was the son of the widely honored Basil Manly Sr., and pastor of the First

Baptist Church of Richmond, Virginia; and Williams, recently from Harvard, was a rising pastor of Alabama. In 1877, after twelve years of financial struggle, it was removed to Louisville, Kentucky.

The Seminary had been in its new home-city eight years when Archibald Robertson entered as a student from North Carolina. It had as yet no home of its own. The Waverly Hotel served as dormitory, while the lecture rooms were up two flights of steps in the Library Hall on Fourth Avenue. This arrangement continued until 1888.

The first session (1885-6) was full of hard routine work. Because of his college record in Greek, Robertson entered the class of Senior Greek, besides taking on extra studies in New Testament Textual Criticism. He became a member of the *Shakespeare Seven* which had been organized only a few years previously.

The first vacation (1886) was spent pleasantly and profitably. He visited Richmond, Virginia, for the first time; and saw Richmond College from the outside. He attended Wake Forest Commencement where he met his student-brother Eugene whom he had not seen for three years. He preached for the First Church at Raleigh where he had already made many friends. The rest of the vacation was spent in the mountain health resort of Hendersonville, N. C., where he greatly enjoyed preaching to the church and the summer visitors who expressed their appreciation of his "sprightly sermons" by presenting him with a special gift of money. He completed his summer's labors by holding a meeting with Enon Church on the French Broad River.

The second session (1886-7) was likewise filled with hard



work. He took on as extras Patristic Greek and Assyrian. These labors did not prevent his working among the lowly in a down-town hall, called the "California Mission."

Unfortunately, he was taken with a grave attack of typho-malarial fever which endured for five weeks. The severity of the illness was probably due to his poor powers of resistance. He was nursed by his fellow-students.

By spring of 1887 he had resumed his studies and was preaching in a near-by church in Illinois, and began to supply the First Church of Covington, Kentucky. These services lasted till October 3, 1887. The church and the young professor were so drawn together in mutual sympathy that he would have accepted the pastorate had his Seminary work been finished. This ministry with the Covington church greatly helped him in that, as he says, he "got hold of preaching." It was during this summer that he became acquainted with the Blue Grass region of Kentucky and the brethren of Elk Horn Association. His visit to Versailles was a delight to him.

He returned to the best opening of the Seminary in its history, with 190 students. He began his year's work "very tired," and found it hard to "get into the harness." Nevertheless he took on outside preaching, which naturally retarded his recuperation. We may be sure that this was in order to help the family back home.

His journal of November 6, 1887, his twenty-fourth birthday, begins to indicate the worn-out state of his nerves. The unhappy and even grave state of his health became worse during the next two years until he even despaired of his life. On this birthday he was "full of regrets, bitter and sharp."

Besides his regular work, in spite of his bad physical condition, he had German Theology, Foreign Hymnology, Patristic Greek, and the Coptic language. Surely the faculty did not know his condition.

On Thanksgiving Day, President Boyce, out of his full and generous purse, gave the students "a magnificent dinner." On that day of quiet and contemplation Robertson speaks in his journal of having "gotten wider views of life, a deeper sense of personal responsibility, greater consciousness of sin, and higher aspiration after holiness."

He mentions two extra-curricular phases of his Seminary life. One was the literary, intellectual, and social pleasure and profit he gained from the *Shakespeare Seven* which he mentions repeatedly.

The other was *Missionary Day*, usually the first of every month. This seems to have been a custom peculiar to the Louisville Seminary. On that day all classes are suspended, and a mass meeting of the faculty, students and friends is held in chapel for the consideration of missions at home and abroad. Young Robertson was deeply impressed by the celebrations of *Missionary Day*, and by the missionary spirit that pervaded the Seminary.

It was during his senior year that he had a meeting in his room of a group of the leading Seminary men to discuss the advisability of founding a Seminary magazine. In due time a staff of editors was elected, and they in turn elected him as editor-in-chief, and the enterprise was launched.

On the various anniversaries—his birthday, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas and New Year's—he opened his heart to

his journal where we see it quivering with his own emotions. On Christmas Day, 1887, the last Christmas for him as a student, his thoughts reverted to the happy Christmas days at Cherbury. He then became despondent regarding the future, and wondered if his "longings of early manhood will ever ripen into a life of broad culture?" And, a few days later, on New Year's Day, Robertson was sensible of his "failures, imperfections and sins" which had "blurred" his life.

On a later occasion, he was stirred by the thought that he was nearing the end of his student days. He recalls that when he was fifteen years old his mother told him that after another fifteen years she would be still prouder of him. At that moment he was only in his twenty-fifth year, and remarked that he had six more years to go. Yet he wondered whether the Lord would fulfil his mother's prophecy.

During the early days of 1888 Moody and Sankey held a six-weeks' meeting in Louisville. Robertson told of an experience he had in soul-winning. A gentleman from West Virginia was on a tour and attended one of Moody's meetings. In a conversation with him in an after-meeting, the visitor showed that he was perfectly satisfied with himself. Indeed, he was a universalist and had no fears. Robertson wrote: "After some time I got him on his knees and persuaded him to pray. He arose with tears of joy in his eyes, and said: 'I shall write my wife that I am a Christian.'"

Telling of Moody's dramatic power in preaching he related that when the evangelist described Abraham's offering of Isaac it was all so realistic that a woman in the audience screamed. He gave his estimate of Moody in these words:

"He breaks grammar all too much. But he has a grip on the Bible, human nature and God." He said of Moody's sermon on the Holy Spirit that it was "the most enrapturing and heaven-inspiring discourse" he ever heard.

On Missionary Day he read an essay in a "dreadful, poor way" and was much discouraged. He said: "I am like Demosthenes in that I have a hesitation in my speech when I grow nervous. But unlike Demosthenes I have not yet completely overcome it."

On February 22, 1888, he recorded: "We moved yesterday from the Standiford Hotel. We are now in our elegant new Seminary building, New York Hall."

When on March 8th, Dr. Broadus was gravely ill with fever, and his friends were apprehensive, Robertson wrote these significant words: "No man has left such a deep impress upon my life and cast of thought as he. I shall bear his mark upon me as long as I live." This was some years before Robertson became a member of Dr. Broadus' family.

He had a delightful preaching experience with the Mt. Sterling (Kentucky) Baptist Church. He stayed over on Monday, and records: "I saw a regular Kentucky Court Day. It was a sight to see. The streets were full of men and other animals. . . . It reminded me of old times in Virginia when I would go to the Court House at Chatham."

It may be added that one of the advantages of student life in Louisville was that of having the opportunity of hearing large numbers of distinguished men who visited the leading cities of the land. Robertson makes due mention, with comment, of a number of these traveling preachers,

lecturers, or propagandists.<sup>1</sup> He recognized that in seeing and hearing them he was broadening the horizons of his experience and general culture.

On April 7th he writes, "This morning Dr. Broadus told me that the Faculty of the Seminary had decided to ask the Board of Trustees . . . to appoint me as an assistant of Dr. Broadus in Greek and Homiletics."

This was probably the reddest of "red-letter days" in all his life. He was at the forks of the road. It meant that he was not to give himself to the pastorate, but to sacred scholarship.

On May 19th, he stood his last examination, which happened to be in Church History, and said: "Tonight I am weary. . . . I am longing to go home. For I long, now that my nine years of student life are over, *to see my mother.*"

<sup>1</sup> During the three years of his student life in Louisville, he mentions Sam Jones, H. Ward Beecher, Edward Judson, Joseph Cook, Will Carleton, Justin McCarthy, P. S. Henson, Geo. W. Lorimer, Phillips Brooks, Joseph Parker, Arthur O'Connor, M. P., Sir Thomas Grattan Esmond, DeWitt Talmage, Francis Murphy, J. Wm. Jones, and James G. Blaine.



PART II

FULFILMENT



## CHAPTER I

### THE THEOLOGICAL PROFESSOR

When Robertson had been professor thirty-one years, *The Christian*, the British religious journal, said of him: "There are men who are clearly marked out for the teacher's desk from their student-days. One thinks of Melancthon who was appointed a University Professor at the age of sixteen—a prodigy even in those days of early maturity; of Neander, who was called to a Professor's Chair at twenty-two. . . . Dr. A. T. Robertson, while he may be classed with born teachers, who came into their own with a leap, belongs to a different and even rarer order. He combines the massive thoroughness of the scholar with the broad and immediate appeal of the preacher." Such he was—the scholar-preacher—from his student-days to that last day when he was not able to finish his lecture!

So it was that Archie Robertson, the student, just under the age of twenty-five found himself at his desk addressed as "Professor Robertson" of the faculty of the largest seminary in the land. His career as a professor began October 1, 1888, and ended forty-six years later, lacking one week.

One of the pleasing and revealing features of this early distinction as a scholar was the genuine joy and pride with which it was greeted by his Seminary fellow-students.<sup>1</sup> These

<sup>1</sup> In his journal, Prof. Robertson mentions with affection the following, among others, of his Seminary fellow-students, whom we list alphabetically:

men, in their correspondence, jovial and serious, were not ashamed to write simply and frankly to their dear "Rob," "I love you." One of them wrote, "You were my best friend, and I love you most of all," while another said, "I had rather see you tonight than any boy in the world."

These were strong men who in a few years were eminent pastors, professors, college presidents, missionaries, and denominational administrators. Robertson had in a high degree the gift of friendship. He loved his friends and rejoiced in their love. One who still abides with us, looking back over the long years, in a recent letter writes: "His friends were a feast to his soul."

This latter friend, in reminiscent and lively strain, writes of his dear "Rob": "I can never forget the day Dr. Broadus discovered young Robertson. This Wake Forest student showed such a grasp of Greek that the great teacher's thrill and satisfaction were manifest to us all. Thereafter, in questioning the class, he would close the discussion with, 'and now what does Brother Robertson think about it?' Really, his discovery of Robertson was like one discovering a diamond mine."

His scholarly traits, even as a Seminary student, were thus instantly recognized. During the summer of 1888, just preceding his induction as assistant to Dr. Broadus, the latter had written of Robertson's "weakness for doing everything thoroughly."

E. V. Baldy, H. A. Bagby, P. V. Bomar, B. P. Bostick, J. G. Chastain, Z. T. Cody, Ernest Cook, L. O. Dawson, H. G. Ferguson, Peter Goldsmith, G. W. Hurt, J. W. Lynch, J. W. Loving, H. P. McCormick, W. B. Oliver, R. G. Patrick, E. M. Poteat, W. S. Royall, A. B. Rudd, D. M. Ramsay, G. B. Taylor, J. L. White, T. L. West.

Notwithstanding the sympathy and love of his fellow-students, young Robertson's soul was not too much lifted up with pride. He wrote: "No one feels so much as I my utter unfitness for the position," and he took up his new tasks with "mingled fear and hope." One of his Seminary friends, in humorous mood, when wishing for him the best things of life for the future, in the language of the mountain preacher, hoped that he might be "*ani-i-nted* with the *ile* of Patmos."

In the preceding month of May, 1888, Professor Robertson had been called to the pastorate of the Newcastle church for two Sundays a month, which call he accepted; but owing to bad health he had to relinquish it the following December. Soliloquizing, he writes: "Now I am a graduate of the Seminary, of College, a teacher for the next year. Nine years of student life have sped by. God has answered the prayer of my childhood for an education. I wonder what use I shall make of it!"

He visited his family for two weeks at Cool Spring, N. C. It was a visit "full of memories and almost tears." He attended the Wake Forest Commencement where he was welcomed with joy and pride. He says: "I felt so unworthy of it all." Upon his return to Kentucky he transferred his church membership from Statesville, N. C., to the Newcastle church, and settled down in his first pastoral work.

Then the crash came! A nervous break-down! His journal becomes hard reading, hard on the reader's nerves, as he stands by and sees a friend in physical and mental agony. Physically his exhausted nerves produced indigestion, and the combination issued in insomnia: all these produced



mental depression, despondency, prayers, confessions, and tears.

On Sunday, July 29, 1888, he was ordained to the gospel ministry by the Newcastle church. He was disappointed that neither of the two older professors could be present. Broadus was in the North, and Boyce was leaving for Europe for his health, never to return alive. The ordination service was very impressive, and deeply moved the congregation. Looking back over the years he writes: "My life is linked on to a chain of prayers . . ." which he prayed might be answered.

His feelings, naturally, went up and down with the state of his nerves. His church, it seems, did not fully realize his condition. He had physical resiliency, however, that was deceiving. For a time he would seem better and was cheerful. Then would come the reaction. The "negro spiritual" would seem to be a true, even scientific, description of nervous prostration: "Sometimes I'm up, sometimes I'm down, O, yes, Lord! Sometimes I'm almost to de groun'." It was at such a time that he despondently wrote: "I need a wife to cheer me."

Upon the advice of Dr. Broadus, Professor Robertson spent a week of the summer of 1888 at White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, and then two weeks at Orkney Springs, Virginia. The absolute rest, making new friends, the curative waters and good food—all together restored his spirits and added ten pounds to his weight.

He returned to Newcastle much encouraged, though not fully well, and resolved not to overwork himself again. He was gladdened to meet three of his Seminary friends at the Sulphur Fork Association, and felt much refreshed. Shortly

afterward he returned to Louisville to take up his new professorship. The Seminary opening was very auspicious with one hundred and twenty-five men. He remarks: "*I am sure I do not know how to teach, but I am equally determined, by the grace of God, to learn how.*" Those words are, probably, as illustrative of the man as any he has left us. Humility, determination, and the grace of God!

He had the high privilege of living for that year in the house of Dr. Boyce, along with Dr. Kerfoot and his charming wife. He faced the year's work with these words: "For the rest, I look up, and on and on, Godward; and He will not fail me!"

On his twenty-fifth birthday, November 6, 1888, the day on which Grover Cleveland lost the election for the presidency, he was almost "down to de groun' again." "Sometimes," he says, "I shall make bold to say, I even despair of my life." A little later he confessed: "To be honest, my life thus far has had too much self in it." He even reached the depths of self-depreciation of the Psalmist and of Paul when on November 19th he wrote: "I am a poor worthless worm as I never saw myself before."

He was deeply impressed with Munkacsy's "Christ Before Pilate," which was being shown in Louisville; and commented on its deep meaning. It is now in the Museum in Budapest, Hungary. A good copy of this picture still hangs on the walls of the classroom where he taught.

In another of his "down" experiences, when contemplating a shortened life, he exclaims: "Come life, come death, so God's will is done in me! After all, why should I live?" He then probed his heart, Augustine-like, and said: "I shall

confess that I have been too ambitious for personal fame," and adds: "Many a time have I prayed that the dreams of a blessed mother might become true in her boy."

The Seminary work and care of a church were too much for a nerve-wracked body, so Professor Robertson gave up the care of the Newcastle church. It was not without a struggle, for pastor and people had grown, in those brief months, to love each other dearly in the Lord. In the formal resolutions the church "recognized" in Professor Robertson one who discharged "his duties as pastor punctually, faithfully and *pleasantly*." That was high and considered praise, even if quaintly expressed.

On December 28, 1888, President James P. Boyce died in Pau, France, and the Seminary was in mourning. Of the Great Quartet, only Broadus and Manly now remained. For thirty years they had worked side by side, and with Williams who had passed on, had founded a great school of prophets. Dr. Boyce's body was brought back from France and buried from Broadway church, the funeral services being "in every way worthy of the dignity and greatness" of the lamented Seminary Founder and President.

Professor Robertson's health continued to improve, though "dyspepsia still hung on in a jerky way." By March 3rd, he confides that he is beginning "to love to talk to his journal," though he does not "scribble often." He says, perhaps significantly: "There are so many things in one's life that he would like to prattle about, but cannot, for people would call him silly. I suppose this is one of the blessings of a wife." He adds: ". . . There are many secret heart-throbs that I cannot tell even to my journal." He was re-

solved to fight for good health, saying: "After all, what is a man's life worth if it be not given to God, and his kindred and mankind?"

Some time prior to these events, Dr. Basil Manly had been struck down by a "foot-pad" and seriously injured. He partially recovered from the blow; but now his health was becoming increasingly delicate, to the grave concern of his friends. The saintly professor lingered on for two more years, dispensing blessing by his very presence.

In March, Dr. J. Wm. Jones, Robert E. Lee's chaplain, preached a stirring sermon in Broadway church on "Salvation Through Christ." Several joined the church that day, one of whom was a little boy. Unbidden tears filled the eyes of the young professor as he recalled that thirteen years before, in the same month of March, he, a little boy of twelve, had made his confession of faith. He says: "I thought of the goodness of God to me since; and no wonder my heart melted."

As the spring approached he preached with more ease and power at Walnut Street church than he had on former occasions. He accepted the invitation to preach, in the coming June, the Commencement sermon at Judson College, Hendersonville, N. C. From there he planned to attend Wake Forest Commencement, visit the folks at home, and spend the summer in the cooler North where he hoped fully to restore his health.

His journal is then silent till December 31, 1889. Yet he speaks of it as "my journal that I have learned to love so much." He mentions that many things had come to pass that he could never commit to paper. His health was now

almost entirely restored. He "buckled down to work in earnest" and viewed the future with hope. Speaking of his work of the Seminary year of 1889-90 he writes: "It has been one of the best I have ever had in real progress and growth."

He entered the last decade of the century with a renewed dedication to God. He did not dream what that decade would mean to his life—the beginnings of scholarly labors, European travel, marriage, denominational conflict, and the development of his powers of leadership.

Beginning with March, 1890, he was supply-pastor for the Ninth Street Church of Cincinnati, during the absence of the pastor, Dr. Johnston Meyers, in Europe. It was a memorable and delightful experience with a great soul-winning church, where he formed strong and pleasant friendships.

He finishes his journal with disclosing a secret. He writes: "I have been in love; and my love and I had a falling out. Now I wander around with no one to care for me. I am afraid I do not know how to win a woman's love. Where and when will I find another whom I can love?"

These closing words, naturally, help to explain, in part, nervousness, indigestion, despondency, and thoughts of life's failures, and even of death. And, as to not knowing how to win a woman's love, his accumulated correspondence, so carefully conserved through a long life, would indicate that, in that very period, more than one young lady would not have been so very hard to win. During his college days he had been too much of a student to be "a ladies' man." This situation continued during Seminary days, to a large degree. But with the multiplying of his social contacts, resulting



from his increasing popularity as a young preacher, his social life, naturally, became more normal and stabilized, yet with the unhappy ending mentioned in veiled language in his journal. He did not know that a girl of eighteen, of high birth, and of a mind and spirit in every way equal to his own, was unwittingly waiting for him.

### OFF TO EUROPE

Few people realize why they wish to go to Europe, and not to Asia. The Italians would call it "nostalgia." To us it's just plain home-sickness. Europe is our old home, the land of our forebears. Europeans are our blood kinsmen. In the nature of things, we are bound up in the bundle of life with Europe. We are one with Europeans in race, culture, education, religion, and destiny. As Europe goes we go. America is but the ethnological prolongation of Europe. So, the desire to visit Europe, though usually all unconscious, is as natural as the "pull" that takes us back to "the old home-place" in this land. The child wishes to see the place where Daddy was born, and is filled with certain awesome joy as he contemplates the scenes of his father's childhood.

Professor Robertson had traveled in a few Southern and Northern states, though he had not seen the great Central and Far West. But by a sure instinct, at his first opportunity, he turned his face toward Europe. No advertisements of railroads or travel agencies to "see America first" had any appeal for him. He wanted to stand on the soil of his Scottish and English sires, and of his more distant Continental kinsmen.

In company with two dear friends, J. H. Farmer (later

Professor of New Testament Greek at McMaster University, Toronto) and L. O. Dawson (later President of Howard College of Alabama), he set sail on June 12, 1890, on a Scottish vessel for Glasgow. The party remained abroad till September 10th. Their itinerary included Scotland, England, Belgium, Holland, France, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland. On their journeys they met various American friends, including Dr. and Mrs. Kerfoot of the Seminary. They came down from Scotland through the Lake Region, and heard Maclaren at Manchester. They heard, also, Spurgeon at the Tabernacle, who in conversation, inquired about his good friend, Dr. Broadus.

In a letter to Dr. Broadus from Berlin, Professor Robertson wrote: "I am digging away at German, and am determined to master the language so as to have it under control for the coming session. Since leaving college I have not had time to expand my German." That was just like him! When off on a journey to rest his body and refresh his spirits he could not resist "digging" on a language!

In Berlin he had the interesting experience of attending the lectures of German scholars whose works he would use in later years—Dillmann, Strach, Pfeleiderer, and Weiss; and later in Leipzig he heard Lothardt and Zahn. He concludes cheerfully by saying, "I feel much invigorated by the summer's travel and greatly grateful for this opportunity for added culture."

By September 20th he was back at Louisville working on his address on "Preaching and Scholarship" to be delivered at the opening of the Seminary. It was afterward put in pamphlet form and was cordially received by his friends

and Seminary circles and added to his standing as a rising scholar and writer.

He began to build his library on the New Testament Greek Grammar and Syntax with imported German books. American scholars early discovered the young Louisville professor. A. H. Newman, in a letter of March, 1891, wrote of his "scholarly article on the text of Joshua," and added, "I shall read with interest future products of your pen, which I trust will be abundant," and expressed his desire personally to meet him.

J. Rendel Harris, also, discovered him in the same article on "The Book of Joshua in the Septuagint." He wrote Professor Robertson: "Please accept my sincere thanks. . . . I warn you that you are on the edge of a vortex, and encourage you to get into the middle of it. You will not find very many people there ahead of you."

His Seminary friends who promptly and happily were settling down in married life were becoming disturbed over his continued bachelorhood, and generously and in good humor offered their help, giving names and listing the graces of various lovely and eligible young ladies.

He was invited to be on the program of the Baptist Congress of May, 1892, along with Drs. E. G. Robinson, A. Hovey of Newton, and President Hill of Rochester. His subject was "The Relative Authority of Scripture and Reason." He spoke so rapidly that the reporters could not take him down. His address was promptly stigmatized as "hyperorthodox," and, later, as inventing a new system of logic. This was, probably, the first blood he shed in theological combat.

He was much sought after by Baptist journals, so that in three years' time he was recognized as a rising and brilliant Baptist scholar and theological professor. However, his scholarship was not universally welcomed. One Seminary student felt that he was overdoing the matter, afterwards remarking that "Professor Robertson knew *too much* Greek to teach it."

Various strong theological cross-currents were blowing over the land in those days. A brilliant Southern minister, pastor of a prominent Northern Baptist church, wrote Robertson of an extreme case of "alien immersion," a term not even understood in the North. He told of his church having received into their membership a former member of the Dutch Reformed Church who had been immersed by a "Campbellite" (his word); and remarked that it was a case of a church that "followed the spirit of the New Testament, and transgressed Baptist usage." For decades the "Land-markers" of the Mid-south and Southwest had sought to impose this dogma of anti-alien immersion on the Seminary. The young Seminary professor little knew that in a few short years he would be in the very center of one of the deadliest religious conflicts over this and related doctrines, in all the history of the Southern Convention.

Professor Robertson at this period assisted Dr. Whitsitt in the management of the Student Aid Fund. His correspondence sheds light on the poverty of a large percentage of Seminary students, who in spite of burdensome debts after their college course, desired theological training. It is with a pang of surprise that one reads the names of those who applied for help and who in after years attained to

distinction in their spheres of denominational service, two of whom, at least, became presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention. Dr. Robertson himself had been a beneficiary of the Fund.

During the summer of 1893 two Baptist colleges conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity—his Alma Mater, Wake Forest College, and Ouachita College of Arkansas. Dr. T. T. Eaton, editor of the *Western Recorder* of Louisville, Kentucky, wrote that “no one was more worthy and deserving of the honor.” This was before the days of the “Whitsitt Controversy.”

The circle of his influence widened to other spheres. The uncle of a young student even wrote requesting that his nephew be allowed to copy and use Robertson’s valedictory oration at Wake Forest, since the young man in question had not the time for writing one himself. Another student wrote asking for an outline of a subject he had to discuss.

Prof. Robertson was approached concerning his willingness to accept the presidency of Georgetown College of Kentucky, of which Dr. Manly had formerly been president. But with a great future beckoning him on he declined.

Dr. Broadus in this period wrote of his pleasure at knowing that Robertson had “been working at Sanscrit,” adding that “even a slight knowledge of it has helped me much.”<sup>2</sup>

In 1894 Dr. Robertson made his debut as a serious New Testament scholar when, at the request of the author, he

<sup>2</sup>In the same letter Dr. Broadus incidentally remarked that Dr. W. R. Harper’s plan of giving the Ph.D. degree in theology was, in Dr. Harper’s words, “the greatest advance made in theological teaching for a quarter of a century.” In after years the Louisville Seminary gave this degree, but later discontinued it.



wrote the "Critical Notes" in connection with *Broadus' Harmony of the Gospels*. This, more than anything he had yet done, gave him standing in his field of labor. Baptist scholars increasingly recognized his ability.

In September of the year, he wrote an article in the *Examiner* of New York in which he seriously questioned Kuenen's theory of "inspired history" as advocated by Dr. W. R. Harper of Chicago University. It is interesting to note the various reactions to this bold move of the young Baptist Galahad who dared to attack so great and high a citadel. Dr. Henry G. Weston wrote him these cordial words: "Allow me to thank you for the pleasure I have enjoyed in reading your timely article in this week's *Examiner*. It is an admirable presentation in an admirable way, while its spirit is such that no one can take objection to it." Dr. Henry C. Vedder, speaking of the article, without indicating his own opinion, said: "There is but one judgment of it, namely, that while perfectly courteous, it is the most searching criticism of Dr. Harper's lectures that has yet been printed." Dr. Broadus wrote: "You are severe with Harper, but in a thoroughly fair and courteous way."

In this same year of 1894 Prof. Robertson had a lively newspaper discussion of "the place of woman in the church." He wrote a series of articles for the *Religious Herald* of Richmond, Virginia, which aroused general interest. At least two of his good friends and admirers took issue with him—Dr. E. M. Poteat and Dr. J. B. Gambrell. The former, in his usual humorous way, in a letter expressed the opinion that marriage would probably help Prof. Robertson in his exegesis of the Pauline Epistles.



A. T. ROBERTSON  
The Young Professor



Meantime, for the last three years before his marriage, Dr. Robertson had a happy home at "Mother Cary's," one block from the Seminary on Broadway. This dear lady was a Virginian of a gentleness and refinement that may have reminded him of his own mother. The scores of people who lived there were never *boarders*, but always "the family." She took special interest in the young men in the city for their first job, so that they came to her for counsel in their perplexities, and invariably they made good. Dr. Robertson was a special favorite, and she even claimed some credit for turning his attention to a certain young lady, which the young gentleman would not altogether admit. But he named a son Cary; and in the new Seminary building on Lexington Road, thirty years afterward, a room was furnished in her memory by "the family."

#### MARRIAGE

The *Journal* ended on a low note, on May 8, 1888, in the lugubrious words we have cited: "Where and when can I find another whom I can love?" But the wound was by no means fatal; in fact not nearly so deep as he thought. For, the next year, on his birthday, he wrote his mother: "I am coming to be more of a ladies' man this fall than ever before, you will be glad to know. . . . I have made some charming acquaintances in this city." His mother had been encouraging him to seek the friendship of women. This letter doubtless cheered her heart; in fact, must have given her a little too much hope, for nothing definite happened for five years.

Among his friends he counted Miss Alice Broadus, whose younger sister Ella was for a period just "Miss Alice's" little

sister. Even for a while after the older sister's marriage he did not realize that the younger sister had grown up. But she was now the young lady of the house, with many friends among the Seminary students. Sometimes, on the occasion of a party, she would call in her father to help her by reading in his irresistible fashion an Uncle Remus story.

Ella was born in Greenville, S. C., five years before the Seminary was moved to Louisville. She had graduated with honor at Miss Belle Peer's School, a year having been added to the curriculum at her father's suggestion, the whole class cheerfully taking the extra studies. She had many friends among her school-mates, exchanging week-end visits with girls in the suburbs and enjoying a lively social life in spite of the restrictions then placed on preachers' daughters. Her sister's marriage, which was a deep emotional experience to her, brought her into the position of secretary to her father, and she reveled in his companionship.

In the fall of 1893, she attended the wedding of a girl friend where something happened. As Professor Robertson entered the reception room he saw standing there someone he had not fully known before—*the grown-up daughter of his Senior colleague!* His eyes were seen to dilate as he seemed to say to himself (as it was afterward described): "O, what's this? *She's grown up!*" Then a smile came on his face that did not wear off all evening. Friends said gayly among themselves—"He's fallen in love." He who writes these lines was witness of these things.

Thus, it turned out, as the multitudes of their friends avowed, just as it should be—that the Junior Professor of Greek married the youngest daughter of his chief. Shortly



before "the happy event," as they described such occasions in those Victorian days, Dr. Robertson, writing to his prospective father-in-law concerning a matter that needed mature advice, said, "When I can call you my Father, as well as my truest earthly Friend, then there will be no reason for hesitancy. . . ."

The wedding took place on November 22, 1894, in the old Walnut Street Baptist Church. Less than four months later, the happy household was shattered. Dr. Broadus died on March 16, 1895, universally lamented.

Professor Robertson was selected by the family to be Dr. Broadus' biographer. The task was arduous, requiring much time. His *Life and Letters of Dr. John A. Broadus*, published in 1901, was the first of the library of forty-five books which he wrote in the following thirty-three years of his life.

At the meeting of the Board of Trustees, on May 9, 1895, Professor Robertson was elected to succeed his illustrious colleague and father-in-law as full Professor of New Testament Greek in the Seminary. His feet were now definitely and firmly planted on the road that was to lead to the heights. His friends from all sides expressed their joy at the selection that was so eminently fitting.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DENOMINATIONAL LEADER

The average contemporary of Dr. Robertson, probably, thought of him only as scholar and Bible expositor. He was that, and more. But he possessed also the inner urge and gifts of leadership. This was based on an ability keenly and accurately to evaluate difficult situations and problems and to plan for their solution. This capacity early became evident, as we shall see, but later was deliberately kept in abeyance. It was a great denominational crisis that first called forth this gift and put him for a period in the forefront of denominational affairs.

#### THE WHITSITT CONTROVERSY

One who has had first-hand experience with religious conflicts in Europe for a third of a century, feels quite at home as he pores over the painful records of the "Whitsitt Controversy" of the nineties of the last century. All these examples of religious polemics he recognizes, on the part of some, the same emphasis on secondary matters thought to be fundamental, the same virulence of spirit, the same unethical handling of truth, the same unchristian methods of polemics on the part of some, the same conscientiousness, the same certitude concerning orthodoxy, the same occasional callousness of feeling toward brethren, the same

admixture of the leadership of men of learning with those of the crassest ignorance.

American Baptists in the last one hundred years and more have been afflicted with four tragic controversies—the Anti-missionary conflict of the first half of the nineteenth century, the Slavery Question, reaching its crisis in the middle of the century, the “Whitsitt Controversy” of the last decade of the same, and the Evolution Conflict of the first quarter of the twentieth century, all reaching their culmination in the same section of the country.

It is a truism that overemphasized truth often becomes one of the worst forms of error. About the middle of the last century there arose in the mid-South a conscientious, but exaggerated, protest against the hierarchical and ritualistic errors of the Roman Catholic Church and of those denominations which follow it, and not so far off.

This movement grew out of three elements: (1) Reaction against the Oxford Movement<sup>1</sup> which was influencing the Episcopal church in America and which emphasized historicity; (2) Reaction against the movement of Alexander Campbell which emphasized apostolicity; (3) The inclusion and elaboration of an idea of “the church” which had been more or less current among English and American Baptists from the seventeenth century. A distinguished American Baptist historian to whom I am indebted for the above summary,<sup>2</sup> in a personal letter, says: “I have just at this moment read an associational letter from South Carolina dated 1818.

<sup>1</sup> A Catholic reactionary movement within the Church of England beginning about the year 1833.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. W. W. Barnes, Professor of Church History in the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The writer says that . . . 'today Baptist churches should receive only those who have been regularly baptized by ministers who themselves can trace their baptism back to the New Testament.'

This reaction against Romish dogmas led to the rise of a group of Baptist leaders with a strong leaning toward the very heresies they were opposing, presumably without their being conscious of it. The founder of this party, because of an un-Baptistic doctrine of the church, rejected the ministry of all Protestant denominations, holding that only Baptist preachers are properly ministers of God. His theory of the church and its ministry led to his rejection of the doctrine of the "universal, invisible, spiritual church of God," and the substitution of his dogma of the Kingdom of God being composed of Baptist churches, and not individuals. Consequently he refused to exchange pulpits with ministers of other denominations; rejected immersed believers unless immersed by Baptist preachers; adopted the doctrine of "church succession," which, in principle, is the same as "Apostolic Succession"; and advocated the Bible-plus-history test of orthodoxy, which is but a variation of the Catholic doctrine of the Bible-plus-tradition.

These views, though contrary to the historic Confessions of Faith of Baptists, gained strong hold on large sections of the denomination. They divided the Baptists into two rival camps, doctrinally and sectionally. In general the Baptists of the Atlantic seaboard were of the normal type of Baptists, while many of the Central-southern and South-west in large measure adopted these doctrines with Catholic leanings.

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was organized, largely, by Virginia and South Carolina Baptists of the regular type. The "Big Four," the first professors, were all university men: Boyce of Princeton, Broadus of the University of Virginia, Manly of Newton and Princeton, and Williams of Harvard. Hostility toward the Seminary soon manifested itself.<sup>3</sup>

The issues of the "Controversy" involved the unfortunate tactical mistakes of a pious and honored scholar and professor of Church History, who happened to be the president of the Seminary. The fact of his being from the very section of the country where the opposition had its historic center, did not help him. Indeed, it is probable that that fact was against him, for he rejected that type of Baptist doctrine. These things gave the opponents the opportunity to express their hostility to the denomination's Seminary. The leaders with Catholic leanings made their historic bid for power and governance over Southern Baptist institutions, doctrines, and life. There were other and unfortunate elements which the historian would better leave to oblivion.

To the amazement of the world, it was discovered that vast numbers of Baptists held that if a professor of Church History taught that English Baptists had their origin in the year 1641, he should be ejected from his high office. It did not matter that other authoritative American Baptist historians—Newman, Vedder, and Rauschenbusch—confirmed

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Broadus, as early as April 21, 1859, writing to Dr. Manly said: "It is evident that the Seminary will have much opposition to contend with; not only from prejudice on the part of many in every state; but because Nashville will try to crush it like everything else Atlantic. Surely all that is but a reason why we should stand up to it." Nashville, Tennessee, was the center of *Landmarkism*, as the movement was called.



the above date; it was heresy, and he had to go. His faith in the New Testament was not sufficient. He had to believe in *the Bible-plus-history* dogma to be an orthodox Baptist; and *history as they taught it!*

The opponents of the objectionable professor were stoutly sustained in their contention concerning the historical date by *unanimous votes of District Associations and other Baptist bodies!* The enemies of the Baptists were hilarious. The judicious grieved. Dr. Vedder, the eminent Baptist historian, during the controversy had occasion to speak of "a generation that has been evolving a Baptist history from their own consciousness, instead of learning it from the sources."

The outcome of the "controversy," which lasted three years (1896-99), was that the offending professor and president, for the sake of peace, resigned. This, naturally, caused deep grief to vast multitudes of his friends, and, incidentally, caused the loss of large contemplated gifts to the Seminary from friends outside the Southern Convention; but it could not be helped. The situation had become so painful that the resignation was necessary, for the sake of the Seminary and the denomination, in spite of the fact that the Trustees of the Seminary three times had maintained the principle of freedom in teaching.

His successor, however, continued to teach the same date of origin of English Baptists, and it has been so taught to this day in all the leading seminaries.

The outcome was a Pyrrhic victory. It was too costly. The protagonists of the new Baptist orthodoxy with Catholic leanings were so eager to push the erring professor over the precipice, that they themselves fell into the abyss. We have

heard but little of the Bible-plus-history type of Baptist orthodoxy since that day. An ancient persecutor spoke more truly than he knew, when he said: "It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people."

Viewing the matter now, after more than forty years, we may safely say that the "Whitsitt Controversy," tragic as it was, saved the Baptists of the South from officially adopting doctrines that were a pale imitation of Catholic dogmas and thereby splitting the denomination. Southern Baptists were learning the law of life of democracies—*unity in essentials, and freedom in non-essentials*.

The first gun in the "controversy," which we have thus briefly sketched, was fired in the North. Dr. Henry M. King, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Providence, Rhode Island, in an article in the *Examiner* of New York, in the spring of 1896, assailed Dr. William Heth Whitsitt, President of the Louisville Seminary, because of his published statement that Roger Williams was probably sprinkled. If that were true the First Baptist Church of Newport, Rhode Island, was the first Baptist Church in America, and not Dr. King's church of Providence. This question had from the beginning been the cause of a lively rivalry between the two churches.

Dr. Whitsitt's statement in question had been published three years before (1893) in *Johnson's Encyclopedia*, in the article on *Baptists*, in which appeared also a second highly controversial assertion that the English Baptists originated in 1641. The war was on. Behold how great a fire was kindled from the rivalry between two noble churches.

Upon the publication of Dr. King's article, the Regulars

and Landmarkers lined up in determined array. The former, who were for the most part supporters of Dr. Whitsitt and the Seminary, were uncertain for a while as to the accuracy of Dr. Whitsitt's claim, and pleaded for time and patience till he should issue his book and present his proofs, which he did later. They contended, also, that it was a mere matter of scholarship and had nothing to do with his orthodoxy. The opposition, especially the extremists, took a far graver view of the matter, and felt that he was not worthy to retain his position, either as professor or Seminary president.

Dr. Whitsitt was very solicitous concerning his claims as to his discovery of these historical facts in the British Museum in 1880. When charged with claiming to have discovered what others had already published, he revealed what no one had ever known before. This was the fact that before others had written, he had published *anonymously* in an editorial in *The Independent*, a Pede-baptist journal, his discovery that the date of origin of the English Baptists was 1641. This mode of giving to the world the results of his researches aroused such a storm of criticism and condemnation that he was not able to withstand it. It ultimately, after three years of strife, resulted in his resignation.

The vast majority of his brethren, and the world at large, testified to his purity of character, his loyalty to the gospel as interpreted by Baptists, his scholarly ability, and his capacity as a Seminary administrator. During his presidency the Seminary reached the highest enrollment of students in its history up to that time. But all this could not purchase forgiveness for a tactical *mistake of method* in giving to the world the results of his historical researches.

Dr. Robertson, from the first, took a leading part in the defense of President Whitsitt and the Seminary. On April 30, 1896, he wrote his first article for the *Western Recorder* of Louisville, Kentucky. On August 31st of the same year, he gave to the *Courier-Journal* of the same city what was perhaps his outstanding contribution to the controversy. He summed up the question under eleven heads, which were treated briefly and cogently. It was widely distributed throughout the South. His correspondence indicates universal appreciation of his grasp of the implications of the issue and of his courage.

Dr. Robertson, along with his senior colleague of the younger group of professors, Dr. John R. Sampey, became recognized as the Seminary faculty's leaders of defense. Both of them were men of superior intelligence, of broad culture, and of fearless courage. They instantly saw the implications of the controversy. It was clear as noon-day that if the opponents won on the question of a date in history, all right of research on the part of the Seminary's professors was destroyed.

Dr. Sampey was absent from January to August, 1897, in European and Palestinian travels and study. When he returned he saw that his junior colleague, Robertson, was the acknowledged faculty leader in the controversy, and loyally stood by his side to the end. These two younger members of the faculty fought like knights of old, along with the editors and gifted and eloquent pastors and laymen throughout the land.

Dr. Sampey's unpremeditated speech before Long Run Association in the autumn of 1897, which met with the Wal-

nut Street Church, Louisville, was long remembered. When he saw a resolution condemning Dr. Whitsitt forced through by gag rule, no word of defense being allowed to be spoken, he got the floor, when another and related subject was being considered, and held it for one and a half hours. So terrible was the fury of his indignation at such tactics in a democratic religious body, and so overwhelming was his arraignment of such unholy methods, that the next day the body reversed itself, and a compromise resolution was passed, and temporary peace restored.

What impresses the biographer is the wonder of it, that Archibald Robertson, in a little more than a decade after leaving college, should have developed such a maturity of thought and grasp of great issues that he won so impressive a leadership in an epoch-making controversy. He saw the issue clearly, stated truths plainly, fought the battle fearlessly, and labored unstintedly to the end. Some of his friends thought that his loyalty to his chief and his Seminary was exaggerated, though admirable.

It is true the opponents claimed the victory. They did win a battle, but lost the war. Toward the end it was contended by some that all the faculty, save one, ought to go with the retiring president. It was even said that the Seminary's property should be sold and the proceeds spent on work among the heathen.

But the Seminary remained. The faculty were not ejected. The whole brotherhood heaved a sign of relief that the war was over. In due time the Seminary was largely re-established in the affections and loyalty of the denomination.

It is interesting and significant that Dr. Robertson's corre-



spondence shows that after the close of the "controversy" his former opponents quickly forgot the unpleasantnesses and sought his friendship and fellowship.

### THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

The last year of the nineteenth century meant for A. T. Robertson, already a scarred veteran of many journalistic battles, disappointments, discouragements, frustrations, misgivings, and fears regarding the great Seminary to which he had dedicated his life. But, happily, before the year's end, night gave way to dawn.

Dr. Whitsitt's resignation, written on July 14, 1898, was accepted by the Board of Trustees, and he ceased to be president at the close of the Seminary's session in the first days of May, 1899. He continued his residence in Louisville till the last days of the year, when he sailed, with his family, to Europe to renew his researches in the libraries of Amsterdam, the British Museum, and Oxford.

Before his departure he was much cheered by a great farewell banquet tendered him by the foremost citizens of every creed, business, and profession of the city. It was served in the Galt House, the famous old hostelry of Louisville. Two hundred guests, in accordance with the most ancient folk-custom of the human race, sat down to eat with him to express their fellowship and admiration, and to wish him God-speed. Dr. Carter Helm Jones, son of Robert E. Lee's chaplain, one of the orators of the occasion, told a story of the Boys in Gray. A young soldier-boy came into camp one day, who looked so fresh and callow that no one of the hard-boiled veterans wanted to bunk with him. The next

day there was a battle. The Colonel was shot down and the colors fell. They saw a boy-soldier spring forward to seize and carry the colors to the front; and that night every soldier wanted to bunk with him. Then he added, quizzically: "And it seems tonight that everybody is anxious to mess with him." The retiring Seminary president, with unbowed head, arose, in the tense silence, and with dignity and deep emotion spoke his farewell to his friends and neighbors, and among other things said, "This great ovation is the brightest spot in my history," and added that of all the homes in which he had lived, his "Louisville home was the dearest of all." He was the last professor who could ever say that he had been the colleague of every professor of the Seminary, except Williams, from its founding to that hour.

The new president-elect, Dr. E. Y. Mullins of Newton Centre, Massachusetts, had accepted the call extended him on July 8th, and at the opening of the Seminary on October 3, 1899, was inaugurated, thus closing the first great period of the Seminary's life, and opening another and greater.

In his personal life, the year 1899 brought deep and poignant grief to Dr. Robertson. On Sunday, April 16th, while he was absent from home in Middletown, Ohio, his mother passed away at her home in Cool Spring, North Carolina, in her seventy-first year. It was impossible for him to be present at the funeral. It was not till July that he was able to visit his father and family and mingle his tears with theirs.

This wonderful mother had held the love and admiration of her home-circle through all the years of early prosperity, disappointment, privation, sorrow, and ill-health up to the

very last. Josephine spoke for them all when she wrote her brother: "I have never known a woman of higher endowments of mind and person."

"Sorrows never come singly," says the old adage. Less than four months had passed (August 4, 1899) when he was stunned by the sudden passing of his younger brother, John, so beloved and promising, who was in his first pastorate, Rock Hill, S. C. Senator Josiah W. Bailey, then editor of the *Biblical Recorder* of Raleigh, North Carolina, and life-long friend since Wake Forest days, wrote expressing his sense of loss in the death of his dear friend, "brilliant" John.

#### LEADERSHIP CRISIS

In the early days of the new century Archibald Robertson was confronted with a problem, the solution of which was to determine and give direction to his whole after-life.

He was a born leader. The spirit of leadership within him was not, however, mere bossiness, that common vice of smaller souls, and yet one into which even great leaders sometimes fall. He saw issues clearly. He had imagination. He foresaw things. He reasoned sanely. His judgment was usually good. Those with whom he labored, whether in controversy or other enterprises, came to lean on him. They acknowledged his gifts, his brilliance, his sanity, and his courage. All this became evident in the "Whitsitt Controversy," and is abundantly demonstrated and illustrated by his massive correspondence.

To what heights he could have risen in the counsels of the leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention, which was just

emerging into its great era of growth and power, is left to the imagination. But Robertson, after due deliberation, turned aside from the joy, the glory, and the dangers of denominational leadership in its larger aspects, and dedicated his powers to sacred scholarship. The explanation is simple when the facts are considered, and throws a flood of light on his spirit of self-sacrifice, his sound judgment, and his sense of values. Indeed, in this decision, probably, is revealed, more fully than elsewhere, Robertson, the man and Christian.

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was the child of the vision, wisdom, love, and sacrifice of a small group of remarkable men. Up to the opening of the twentieth century, the period under consideration, the Seminary had appealed to the emotions, pride, religious devotion, and loyalty of a restricted, but ever-increasing, group of Christian individuals. It had been thought of more as a school of prophets and source of spiritual influence—and such it undoubtedly was—than as a denominational institution of power and guidance in all that relates to the Kingdom of God, both materially and spiritually, in the activities and agencies of the Convention.

The first three great Seminary presidents were men of eminent ability and personality, with great gifts of leadership, each in his own way. They could have succeeded, doubtless, in any walk of life. But high-powered leadership, in the modern American sense, was not their task, and made no appeal to them as a goal to be sought after, or even desired.

Upon the passing of President Whitsitt and of that first

group of presidents and professors, a new day dawned. The twentieth century saw the Baptist denomination of the South facing an era of organization and work undreamed-of by the fathers and founders. Great enterprises were coming into being—missionary, literary, educational, eleemosynary, humanitarian, and administrative—that needed and gathered vast funds and equipment for their several tasks. The Seminary was a part of the picture. It too needed a vastly increased endowment and equipment, and a recognized place in the organized life of the Convention. All this required a new type of leadership in the person of the Seminary president. It was not, indeed, altogether new in kind, but rather one with new emphases. The leadership of the former presidents had been personal, rather than official. Dr. Mullins, the new Seminary president, fitted the new day. He was the man for the place and hour. It soon became evident that from that time on there could be but one Seminary leader and spokesman.

Archibald Robertson now faced what was one of the gravest problems of his life. Should he forego all the joys of employing his great talents in working out great plans, give up all the sense of elation and glory over admirable things achieved, and all the satisfaction that comes from the knowledge of having served God and man in great enterprises which he had led? Or, was he to renounce it all and dedicate himself to the less conspicuous, though by no means less important, life-work of New Testament scholarship? He chose the latter. Who will ever doubt the wisdom of his choice? Yet, for him indirect leadership remained.

In the founding of the *Baptist Argus* (later the *Baptist*



*World*) of Louisville, Kentucky, in 1897, Dr. Robertson had had a prominent part. He was a frequent, if not prolific, contributor to its columns over his own signature. Besides, he was unofficially and anonymously on the editorial staff for a while.

It was in this indirect way of his large use of the press that he continued his work of leadership in helping to guide the thought and activity of the brotherhood. His wide correspondence, through the years, testifies to this. As a writer, he was clear, cogent, and usually convincing. Naturally, at times in controversy, his words struck fire when coming in contact with flint.

This indirect leadership by means of his pen is best illustrated, perhaps, by the story of the organization of the great Baptist world-fellowship.

#### THE BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE

"Œcumenicity" is a word of rather recent coinage. In some circles it is becoming popular and looked upon as impressive. It is the Greek way of expressing the Anglo-Saxon concept of *world-wide-ness*. Something more than a half century ago this same idea began to lay hold of various groups and peoples. The popular way of expressing it was by prefixing the Greek pronoun *pan* (every, all) to the name of the group—as in the titles Pan-Slavism and Pan-Germanism. It was the ecumenical idea expressed in more simple form.

The idea of a Christian world organization is as old as the "historic churches." Œcumenicity is one of the fundamental teachings of the two Catholic Churches, Greek and Roman.

They make world-wideness, universality, catholicity—terms approximately synonymous—a fundamental dogma.

Protestant world union, on the other hand, is not a matter of doctrine, but a method of strengthening the spirit of world fellowship among the members of a given denomination. Dr. Rippon, Spurgeon's predecessor, of Carr's Lane, London, in 1790, suggested the idea of some sort of Baptist world organization. But it was perhaps too soon for realization.

Of the Protestant denominations the Presbyterians seem to have been the first to achieve œcumenicity, though they did not know it, for the word had not been coined. This was in 1875, when the representatives of some 30,000,000 members and adherents of the various Presbyterian national bodies met in London and founded the *Alliance of the Reformed Churches Throughout the World*. This is a non-legislative, fraternal body meeting quadrennially.

One morning in 1895, just twenty-five years after these events, the editor of the *Religious Herald* of Richmond, Virginia, Dr. R. H. Pitt, sat in his sanctum, somewhat weary, and in search of new ideas for his editorial column. His closest friend, Dr. W. W. Landrum, pastor of the Second Baptist Church of the city, dropped in for a chat. The tired editor appealed to him for a topic that would be "not too hackneyed."

The daily press in those days was discussing the *Pan-Presbyterian Congress*, which was to meet in Glasgow, Scotland, the following year. Dr. Landrum said: "Why not propose a *Pan-Baptist Congress*?" The remark was as a spark to tinder. During the following month the *Herald*

discussed the idea and made pleas for its actualization. The suggestion met with great favor in the columns of the American Baptist press, as well as in those of the *Freeman*, the Baptist paper of London. The question naturally arises why the idea was not pressed to a solution instead of being quietly dropped.

The answer was not given till sixteen years later when Dr. Pitt explained in an editorial in the *Herald* of June 22, 1911, that he had desisted from his campaign at the earnest solicitation of a venerable and beloved Baptist leader of great wisdom, who thought that the time for so desirable a movement had not arrived. It will be recalled that this was in the early days of the "Whitsitt Controversy" which burst like a storm over the heads of Southern Baptists. So, the matter was dropped for some eight years.

With the passing of time, comparative peace settled once more over the Southern brotherhood. Dr. Robertson was on the editorial staff of the *Baptist Argus* of Louisville, Kentucky. In keeping with his usual alertness and originality, he suggested to the editor, Dr. Prestridge, that once a year the *Argus* have a *Baptist World Outlook Number*. The editor adopted the idea, and for several years the first issue of January was filled with messages from Baptist leaders of all the world, often accompanied with their portraits, and sketches of the leading men and movements of their lands, which aroused worldwide interest.

In the issue of January 14, 1904, Dr. Robertson, in an unsigned editorial, renewed the suggestion of Drs. Landrum and Pitt of nine years before, and issued the following clarion call for a Baptist World Congress:

## WHY NOT A WORLD'S BAPTIST CONGRESS?

(The unsigned editorial of A.T.R. in the *Baptist Argus* of  
January 14, 1904)

We suggest, for what it may be worth, that next summer, say in London, the Baptists of the world send some of its mission and education leaders for a conference on Baptist world problems. Suppose Southern Baptists send secretaries Willingham, Gray and Frost and President Mullins. The Northern Baptists could send a similar number. So could Canada, the Maritime Provinces, England, Wales, Scotland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Russia, France, South Africa, Australia and possibly the various mission fields. There would, of course, be no idea of legislation, but such a conference could be a magnificent object lesson to the Baptists of the world and would result in untold good to the Baptist cause the world over. England just now is the storm center for Baptists, but the Baptist cause has great problems and opportunities all over the world. If such a conference led afterwards to a Pan-Baptist Conference on a large scale as to attendance, well and good. If not, it is a thing worth doing for its own sake.

We merely throw out the suggestion with no desire to press it on any body. We invite the Baptist forces of the world to consider it. Let Baptists everywhere think about it, and speak about it. The cost would be inconsiderable for the results contemplated. Baptists would grow in fellowship and would learn much from each other. The conference could last as long as desired.

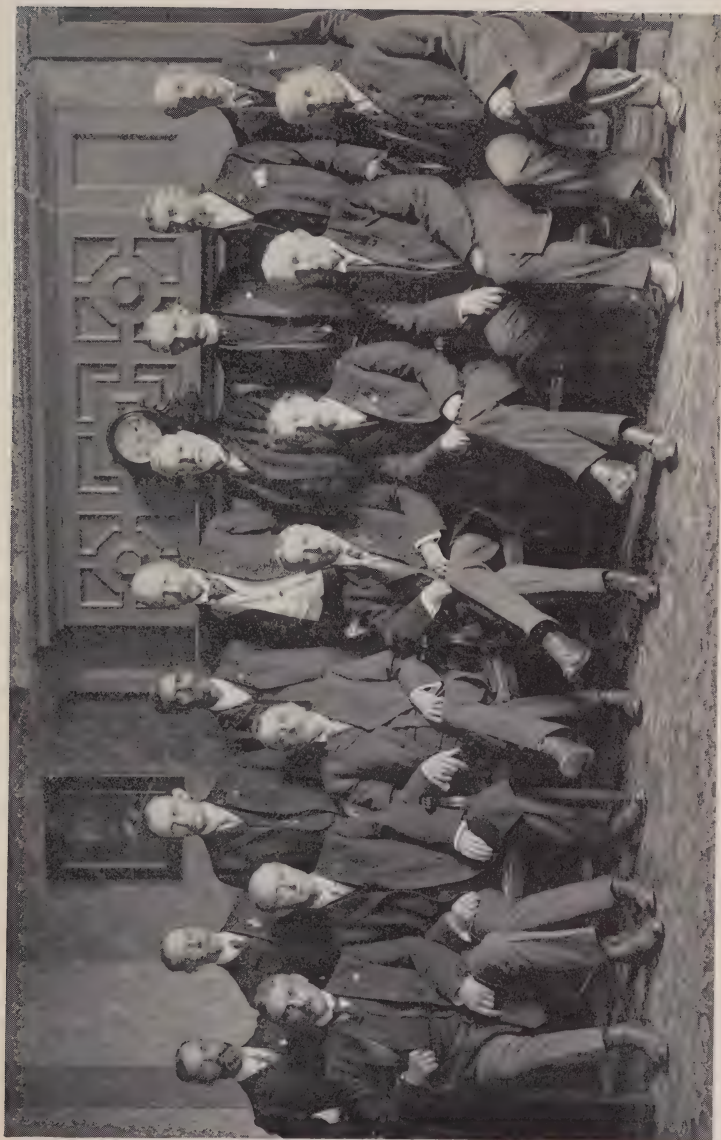
Why not a World's Baptist Conference? What do the papers think? What do you think? Is it practicable? Would it do good? If it is a good idea, say so! If not, say so! We merely throw out the suggestion.

This was in keeping with one of his strong traits manifested from his college days, that is, his interest in current international events. In his senior year he had edited the column of *The Wake Forest Student* on world affairs, and now, we see him leading in a great world enterprise.

Referring to this anonymous editorial call for a World Congress, Dr. Robertson wrote as follows in the *Baptist World* of June 4, 1910: ". . . I had forgotten what Dr. Pitt had written in 1895, or that he had written on the subject, though I had read with interest and sympathy his words on the subject of a Pan-Baptist Conference. It had been some seven or eight years before and the fact had passed out of my mind. The revival of the subject in my mind came directly out of the World Outlook Numbers of the *Baptist Argus* in which matter I was particularly interested, having suggested the issuing of such world outlook numbers. But indirectly I was undoubtedly influenced by what Dr. Pitt had written, and was reminded of it when he later repeated what he had written. It is another case of development or evolution. . . ."

The London Baptist World Congress was an outstanding success, eclipsing all the hopes and expectations of its organizers. The representatives of the Baptist world saw, face to face, and heard the voices of their outstanding leaders—Maclaren, Clifford, Shakespeare, Brown of Britain; Mullins, Prestridge, Robertson, Crandall, MacArthur, and others from America. It really was an epochal event in the life of the Baptist movement in the world. Though Dr. Robertson never posed as an orator, the *British Weekly* reported that he was the only speaker to whom the vast audience gave an





THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO FRAME THE CONSTITUTION OF THE BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE,  
LONDON, JULY 11TH, 1905

*Standing, reading from left to right:* I. H. Farmer, J. S. Dickerson, A. T. Robertson, E. C. Morris, Baron Uixkiull, Timothy Richards, H. F. Richardson, W. T. Whitely, Harold Knott. *Seated:* S. B. Meeser, F. W. Stephens, H. L. Morchouse, L. A. Crandall, J. H. Shakespeare, J. N. Prestridge, W. C. Senior.



*encore*, whatever that may mean in such a non-musical gathering.

Not knowing the paternity of the editorial call, the public naturally supposed that it had originated in the heart and mind of Editor Prestridge. It is true that the latter adopted the idea with promptness, enthusiasm, and ability, and carried the Baptist world brotherhood with him. It was, perhaps, the greatest achievement of its kind in the history of Baptist journalism.

Notwithstanding the contributions of the four Americans—Landrum, Pitt, Robertson, and Prestridge—the Baptist World Congress, which met in London in the summer of 1905, could never have come into being with such glory and power, had there not been a Rev. J. H. Shakespeare in London.<sup>4</sup> He was the Secretary of the British Baptist Union, a man of exceptional executive ability and the leader of the British Baptists. He made the Congress an unrivalled success. He transformed a vision into reality. So, the origin of the Baptist World Alliance was the result of the co-ordinated labors of the distinguished Baptist quintette—Landrum, Pitt, Robertson, Prestridge, and Shakespeare.

A biographer, it may be remarked here, learns far more of human nature than that of the one of whom he writes.

Five years after the London Congress, in an editorial correspondence in the *Religious Herald* of May 26, 1910, Dr. W. C. Taylor of Petersburg, Virginia, in a very fine and

<sup>4</sup> It was revealed later, in the Robertson correspondence, that at first Mr. Shakespeare had no sympathy for the idea of such a meeting at London, considering it rather foolish. But upon seeing how the entire Baptist world was enthusiastic over the plan, he gave up his objection and made the Congress a historic success in the following year of 1905.

fraternal way, raised the question of the origin of the Baptist World Alliance. He asked: "Is it not a fact the idea of a World's Congress of Baptists was mentioned first in the *Herald*?"

To this Dr. Pitt responded by giving for the first time the full and highly interesting story alluded to above, giving full credit to Dr. W. W. Landrum as the originator of the idea. That was fifteen years after the event!

A year later, the same question was raised in the columns of the *Baptist World* (successor of the *Baptist Argus*). On July 20, 1911, Dr. Prestridge wrote: "In this connection, perhaps it is well to repeat that the editor of the *Baptist World* makes no claim to having originated the suggestion of the first Baptist World Congress; so far as this paper is concerned that came from Dr. A. T. Robertson." That was seven years after the event.

The last phase of this question of origin was enacted at the meeting of the *Baptist World Alliance* at Toronto in the summer of 1928, twenty-three years after its founding. In an official historical sketch of the Alliance, read before the body, the Alliance was spoken of as having originated in the mind of Dr. J. N. Prestridge, with no reference to Dr. Robertson.

That was unfortunate, after all those previous efforts to keep the records straight. Dr. W. C. Taylor, in his communication to the *Religious World*, nineteen years before, had feared such a situation might arise, when he said: "Baptists are surely making history now. The question of origin ought to be settled at once, and should any one at any future time be found in error as to the facts, due correction

should be made immediately. To some the question may appear trivial; but from such trivial matters jealousies often arise that strain kindly relations." He wrote as a prophet, indeed.

Dr. Robertson was present at Toronto, it being his last attendance upon an Alliance meeting. Naturally, when he heard the recital of the origin of the body, which was to become part of the official history of the Alliance, in which no mention whatever was made to the part he and others had taken, he would have been less than human had he not made a protest in private to the speaker. He thought that facts so long ago given to the public in the *Baptist World* and elsewhere were known and recognized. Naturally he was amazed and upset. Happily, as soon as the omission was pointed out and confirmed by investigation, arrangements were made by which the matter would be correctly set forth in the published Minutes of the Alliance. Then, *mirabile dictu*, in spite of all efforts to the contrary, the correction was *not* made in the Minutes. To compensate, in a measure, the story was properly set forth in the *Review and Expositor* of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary of Louisville, Kentucky, in the January number of 1929.

The above is the recital of the facts of the origin of the London Congress of 1905. This is not the place to tell the story of the co-ordinated labors of other distinguished Baptists on both sides of the Atlantic, such as Dr. L. A. Crandall and others on this side, and of Dr. Clifford and his colleagues on the other side, who effected the permanent organization and set it forward on its great career of stimulating the Baptist cause throughout the world. The full story



of this stirring chapter of Baptist history will surely be given to the world in due time, including the names of Baptist world leaders like Maclaren, MacArthur, Mullins, MacNeill, Truett, and Rushbrooke, the latter having been for so many years the distinguished Secretary and then the President of the Baptist World Alliance.

### CHAPTER III

## THE PREACHER

Archie Robertson, while not yet seventeen, preached his first sermon on that hot Sunday afternoon in the summer of 1880 during his first vacation. It was in a Negro church, and his honorarium was ninety cents which, he says, was "the biggest pay I ever received." He did no further preaching till his fourth vacation which he spent with Rev. J. B. Boone, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Salisbury, North Carolina. During the next vacation he had his first experience in evangelistic work which was blessed with "some success." During the vacation after his graduation from college in 1885 he had the opportunity of being summer supply-pastor of the First Baptist Church of Charlotte, North Carolina. He refused this attractive invitation and gave himself to the far more difficult and trying experience of doing missionary work in Liberty Association. It was a new and "great experience," as he says, for a college graduate who had been immersed in classic studies for six years. Up to this time he had never come into close contact with the masses of his country brethren. He learned many things in those seven revival meetings that were a revelation to him. He came to know the normal and the abnormal phases of evangelism in the back districts—"the holy laugh," shouting, rolling on the floor, and similar manifestations of a super-

emotional type of religion. This experience was probably the background of many of his quaint and wise observations in the classroom in after years. He spoke out of his personal experience and observation when pointing out to his students the weaknesses and errors growing out of ignorance, though sincerely meant. It was in this period that he came to be acquainted with churches afterward known to his delighted thousands of students as "Possum Trot," "Goose Creek," "Coon Hollow," and the rest, along with "Deacon Skinflint" and "Sister Sharp-tongue."

Fresh from this encouraging and significant experience, he took up his Seminary work in a great city. It did not require much time for some of the prominent churches in the near-by cities to discover him, and he soon was in demand as occasional supply-preacher or supply-pastor. This was in the period when he thought his life-work was to be that of a pastor. He soon "found himself" as a preacher, and rejoiced in his discovery of his God-given gifts. A new life opened to him in this period of service. It is certain that had he not been called to the Seminary professorship he would have become the pastor of some outstanding church.

In after years, in spite of his position as a distinguished Greek scholar, great churches of various denominations in all parts of the land delighted in his pulpit ministrations. It was a source of deep satisfaction to him that his career in sacred scholarship did not deter him from his early and strong desire to be a preacher of the gospel. In fact his scholarship only increased his ability as a preacher. It gave body and lasting worth to his preaching.

At first, as may be seen from his papers and sermon-notes

so carefully preserved, student Robertson preached subject-sermons. He selected a theme, made an outline, and then gathered together thoughts and illustrations which he sought to fashion into a harmonious whole. It was a centripetal mental process—a movement from without to a center of his own choosing. But after he began his monumental intellectual excavations in the language of the New Testament, his preaching of necessity became a centrifugal process. Sermons and sermon-topics were flung up and out in such abundance that there was not time enough for preaching them. The result was that he became a great, if not the greatest, expository preacher of his day.

In these matters, if we may say so in all due reverence, Dr. Robertson's life and labors remind us of the Lord. The New Testament writers refer to Jesus almost equally as Preacher and Teacher. Matthew says, "From that time Jesus began to *preach*," and a few verses below he adds that "Jesus went about in all Galilee *teaching*. . . ." That was, providentially, the order in which Robertson entered his life-work of preaching and teaching.

All this is natural and rational. Preaching appeals to the will, while teaching informs the intellect and conscience. True preaching includes teaching, and teaching without an appeal is lifeless. So it was that, entering upon the career of teaching, was by no means a renunciation or a cancellation of his call to preach. In fact he became the eminent teacher-preacher. He was no mere academic professor of New Testament Greek. True, no scholar of his time knew more than he the history and meaning of Greek words. But he taught Greek philology not only for the scholarly joy of it, but as

a means to a holy end—the setting forth of the truth of the gospel that it might blossom forth in human salvation and life. He taught for results just as he preached for decisions.

His style of preaching was his very own. He imitated no one. He was not an orator of the old school. He had no trick of voice or gesture. His power was simplicity, incisiveness of thought, clarity of diction, transparent honesty, self-evident sincerity, compelling earnestness, spiced at times with a humor distinctively his own. There was no preacher like him among all his contemporaries.

Early in his ministry (1886) a group of friends of Hendersonville, North Carolina, presented him with a material expression of their admiration and gratitude, accompanied with a letter of appreciation in which they referred to his “sprightly sermons.” A third of a century later (1919) one of his former students was pastor in Hendersonville and wrote that the older members were still talking of that summer’s ministry, saying that the whole town was stirred and that Jews came inquiring the way of life.

He was never a dull preacher. He was always “sprightly.” It could not be said of him as Dr. W. L. Poteat said of other preachers: “Some people appear to rest their minds when they preach.” Preaching was never a mental rest either for Doctor Bob or his hearers. It was rather an intellectual and emotional experience not easily forgotten! A member of one of the great Kentucky churches, that through the years delighted in his preaching, referring to this liveliness remarked that after Dr. Robertson’s sermons on Sunday there was no need for further entertainment for the rest of the week. Great business men frequently would write him



of the inspiration and uplift his Sunday sermons had been to them.

When Dr. W. J. McGlothlin entered the Seminary faculty, Doctor Bob took him aside and said: "Now, Mac, you have been elected to be a teacher here. *You must always be in your heart a preacher, first of all.*" Mac's room-mate, for years a distinguished professor of Hebrew in a great Seminary, referring to this incident, wrote: "I know that the advice given that day influenced him to the last."

The greatest single evangelistic service in Dr. Robertson's life, according to his own testimony, was in the First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City in the pastorate of Dr. S. J. Porter. Dr. Robertson had been invited to hold a teaching mission in the church. On the second Sunday morning there was a great congregation, composed largely of young people, that filled the main floor and galleries. The soul of the great scholar was manifestly filled and swept along by the Spirit of God. He was telling the story of the life of Christ. At length he left the pulpit. He walked the aisles. He lifted his face and voice to the galleries. Back and forth he went pleading with his hearers to come to Christ. The result was that about ninety young people and others gave their hearts and lives to the Lord that day. Later, when the pastor described the scene, he was still under the spell of it. The news of this great experience went abroad in the land. When asked by a friend what his text was, Dr. Robertson replied simply: "I had no text. I told them the story of Jesus." That day was reward enough for a life-time's labor.

As the years went on, his preacher-heart was gladdened as he learned that he had helped others to preach. A Presby-

terian pastor wrote him: "As you know, I buy every book I see listed from your pen. . . . You are helping me to preach more than any living man."

A dear friend in 1924 reported a conversation he heard on the street-car in a city where A.T.R. had been speaking. A man said to a friend: "That Dr. Robertson is the man for me. If he spoke regularly here they'd have to build an auditorium twice as large as any they have." The other man asked: "How did you like —?" (mentioning another famous Baptist preacher who had preached in the city). The first replied: "O, he's *too* good! He never smiles!"

During one of his tours in 1924 a young ex-soldier wrote him: "You are the only person who spoke to me about my relation to the Lord during the four years I was in the service." The writer added that it was "a chance word [that] went home."

From Ocean Grove (1928), he wrote: "Yesterday was one of the greatest days of my life. There were eight thousand present in the morning and six thousand at night." President Boswell is reported to have said that he had never heard two such sermons at Ocean Grove in one day.

In 1930, just four years before the end, in an Atlantic Conference where Dr. Robertson was speaking to audiences of two thousand, Rev. J. A. Kaye, one of the visiting speakers, said it was worth a trip from London to hear him speak.

Little did that pious Episcopal clergyman, a half century before, pausing on the front porch of Cherbury to place his hand on the head of the little boy and say, "I hope you'll be a preacher," know that in due time God would so gloriously fulfill his wish and prayer.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TEACHER

It was as teacher of the Greek New Testament that Dr. Robertson made his highest spiritual contribution to the Kingdom of God, while his "Big Grammar," as it is popularly called, was his supreme intellectual achievement. His career as teacher extended over forty-six years (1888-1934). It was not confined to any month or time of the year, comprising all seasons, summer's heat and winter's cold. His classes included the six thousand Seminary students, who from year to year in routine fashion, came under his tutelage; the tens of thousands who heard him in the summer assemblies; besides the multitudes of pastors in conferences at convenient seasons, usually in the cooler months. To all these he gave his best, though of the grand total the majority did not know Greek.

The subject-matter of his teaching was two-fold: the Greek language of the New Testament, and its spiritual content. Logically the first task was the mastering of the language; and then, the exposition of the context. It might seem, therefore, that the story of the "Big Grammar" should come first, then that of his teaching. But as a matter of fact, the two processes went side by side. His work as a teacher and expositor, naturally, began before he became a gram-

marian. For the most part his labors in the two fields ran parallel. His "Short Grammar" and the "Big Grammar" brought up to date the colossal mass of knowledge already achieved by the scholars of the world regarding the language of the New Testament, to which he made his own contribution. As his knowledge of the grammar of the Greek of the New Testament grew, the accuracy of his exposition thereby was increased. The grammarian and the expositor thus walked side by side.

#### CHARACTERISTICS AS TEACHER

Doubtless what distinguished Professor Robertson as a teacher above everything else was his mastery of his subject. This trait early manifested itself in college. He always set a high standard for himself. He spared himself no toil nor pains in seeking to gather all possible relevant knowledge regarding the Greek of the New Testament. He used three modern languages—English, French, and German—along with Patristic Greek, Patristic Latin, Modern Greek, Assyrian, Coptic, and some Sanscrit. He was a hard task-master to himself, and demanded a high standard from his Seminary students.

Dr. Robertson's capacity and penchant for hard work was the wonder of his scholarly friends on both sides of the Atlantic. They constantly referred to it in their correspondence. His output of work, when listed, seems almost incredible. It is true that he observed certain sane rules. For example, he rarely worked at night. He kept his evenings for his family and friends. Besides he found that his best hours for intensive work were between the close of the

Seminary day and a late supper. In this there was beautiful co-operation in the home.

When he worked it was with a sort of fury of concentration. Such love and capacity for hard work came, doubtless, from a high sense of duty, and the inner satisfaction and joy that comes from great achievement. So intense was this love of work that it was impossible for him to comprehend a lazy preacher. For such not only did he have no understanding, but no patience. It is quite probable that he had doubts about a lazy man being called of God to preach. He seems to have adopted the rule of life of "the Preacher" in the Old Testament: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, *do with thy might!*"

A second characteristic of the man and teacher was his sincerity, his hatred of sham and pretense. A great Texas denominational leader writes of his "crystal clear character." Nothing would arouse his indignation more than for an unprepared student to rise, when called upon to recite, and pretend that he had studied the lesson, probably with the hope that by a lucky guess he might "get by." It was understood in the class that all an unprepared student had to do was to hand in a note announcing the fact. Upon a pretender he had no mercy. His severity was not against the unpreparedness, but against the pretense, which to the professor was moral delinquency. There were but few, if any, cases of a student committing this error twice. The large classes of two hundred or more were looking on and learning vicariously their lessons in ethics.

It is probable that Dr. Robertson has been more misunderstood for such severity than for any other element in his



teaching. Some thought it a sign of an unfeeling nature. Abundant evidence, however, is at hand to disprove that judgment.

He inherited this task from his great predecessor, but their techniques varied. A former student of both Dr. Broadus and Dr. Robertson, who has attained distinction as a theological professor, speaking of Doctor Bob, makes these incisive observations: "One of his determinations, that amounted almost to an obsession, was his attitude toward . . . big-headed young preachers. His great predecessor, Dr. Broadus, was the same kind of man. He had no use for a man who did not study. His rebukes and replies to men in the class who showed their lack of study and of their exalted self-opinion were like rapier thrusts. Dr. Robertson felt the same . . . but in his magnificent Scotch way he just chopped such students to pieces." Another who became an intimate friend and admirer says: "Of course, you know as well as I do that the Faculty of the Seminary delegated to him the task [of attending to] the students who needed puncturing of conceit." He was, it seems, the official executioner of ministerial pride.

A story is told of the student, with the French beard and the tailored double-breasted gray suit, who was airing his knowledge of Athens. Doctor Bob eyed him keenly, took his measure, and asked him to point out Athens on the map. The poor ignoramus fumbled about with the pointer and could not even locate Greece. Without even a smile the professor thanked him and waved him to his seat. No words equal to the occasion occurred to him. The roar of laughter of the class sufficed. Another former student puts it suc-

cinctly, "He felt called of God to take the strut and conceit out of young preachers. . . ."

One admirer, speaking of this severity which almost terrified his students, declares that he broke every generally accepted rule of modern pedagogy; but all serious minded men who studied under him agree as to his greatness as a teacher, pedagogy or no pedagogy. One of his most devoted students analyzes him as a teacher as follows: (1) In the English New Testament, a near-tyrant; (2) In Senior Greek, a friendly teacher; (3) In his Seminar groups, a genial comrade in scholarship. Dr. Robertson once said rather sadly to his wife: "The new students hate me for the first few weeks. But, after they make up their minds to study, and learn to do it, they begin to love me."

One of his former students, now the pastor of a great "First Church" in one of the capital cities of the South, writes in an illuminating way, of the other side of Dr. Robertson. He says:

"When my little boy died, during my third year, Dr. Bob was out of the city. When he returned, after the funeral service, Mrs. Robertson told him about our sorrow. Immediately, without changing clothes or 'cleaning up,' he came to me. He was as tender as a mother. 'You must come back to class tomorrow, though,' he said. 'It is the only way—keep busy and don't give yourself time to feel sorry for yourself.' I had felt that I could not go on. Those words of his set me on my feet. I was in class next day. His combined gentleness, sympathy, and realism put manhood in me.

"For several weeks he did not call on me. Often he would look my way and send a subtle glance of sympathy and

encouragement. (How well I still remember those glances and their secret messages.) Then, weeks after my loss, he called upon me for the answer to a very simple question. I did not know, just couldn't remember. Instead of jabbing a very ostensible zero on the grade-book, as he usually did on such occasions, he apologized for calling on me! I think this is my outstanding memory of my old teacher. It showed the real heart of Dr. Bob—not a student-crusher but a student-helper. What he conceived to be the real need of the student he responded to. He loved us enough to humiliate us if that seemed necessary to purge us of the pride that so often mars preachers; but he loved us enough to lift us too when we were down."

Another incident, known to but a few, illustrates the gentler side of Doctor Bob as teacher. It occurred only a few years before his death. One Monday afternoon in his Senior Greek class, an excellent student who had come in from preaching unprepared, for some reason omitted to observe the well-known rule of placing on the professor's desk a note asking to be excused from reciting. As is strangely frequent in such cases, he was called on to recite. Adding to the infraction of the above-mentioned rule, he did not even rise to respond, but, remaining seated, he announced his unpreparedness. The professor, manifestly surprised and disturbed, asked if he had handed in a note. Still remaining seated the student responded that he had not. Dr. Robertson, showing agitation, replied, "Well, brother, what can I do but give you a zero?" The situation was tense and remained so.

The student buried his face in his folded arms on the desk

and intermittently punctuated the class period with dry sobs. At the close of the recitation the class hurried out leaving the weeping student at his desk. The sole witness of the story which follows had remained on the back seat to study during the next period. Doctor Bob gathered up his armful of books to go to his office. He paused at the door with his hand on the knob. Turning, he went to the side of the weeping student and said, "Brother, I'm sorry, but what else was I to do?" The student made no response. Again, the professor spoke, "Your other grades are very good. This should not make a great deal of difference." Still no response. Once more he murmured, "I'm sorry," and turned and left him. The sequel was that a few years later this student was chosen by Dr. Robertson as fellow in his department. No explanation was ever given for the student's strange behavior. It may have been due to incipient sickness or to some trying ordeal through which he had passed.

Light is thrown on this severe side of Professor Robertson's teaching method by the following incident related by one of his fellows: "One morning after the class in New Testament . . . he came back to his office. He walked back and forth in seeming great distress. I made no inquiry. . . . He exclaimed: 'What on earth can I do that I haven't done to inspire those men to learn this book? What are they thinking about? Why do they not master it? How can they expect to preach the book unless they know it?'" That goes to the roots of his teaching—an inexpressible desire that his students "apprehend and be apprehended by" the gospel of Christ.

A former student, now pastor of a great church, writes:

"No one who ever sat in his class can forget the consecrated enthusiasm with which he unfolded the meanings of the Greek New Testament. Of him as of his Master it could well be said, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way and while he opened to us the Scriptures?'" An intimate student-friend writes, "Psychic waves between him and his pupils were always hot." Another adds, "In his classroom there was never a dull moment." Naturally, men such as these were not those over whom their professor wept because of their lack of response to the teaching of the gospel.

Theological teaching rarely connotes sportsmanship. But it can be said that Doctor Bob was a good sport. He could pass the test to which a member of the British Baptist Missionary Society always put a candidate for foreign mission work. This member had been a missionary and knew things. After the rest of the Committee had finished with theology and creeds, this venerable and wise saint, asked the candidate: "My brother, can you *make* a joke?" After the confusion of such a query and its answer had subsided, he posed his second question: "My brother, can you *take* a joke?" This wise and experienced missionary held that one who could not *make* or *take* a joke was unfitted to be a foreign missionary; that the sense of humor was necessary for the teacher and preacher. This psychological test applies also to theological professors. That Doctor Bob could make a joke at the expense of his students all the world knew. But he could take a joke as well.

One of his students who became a college president and later a theological professor was reciting on the Interbiblical



Period. So delighted was Doctor Bob that the new student knew all the Antiochuses and Aristobuluses, and the rest, that he took up the story and told it himself to the end. As the student sat down, while the grade was being jotted down, with his winsome smile, he asked the professor how much he gave him. Doctor Bob looking up somewhat surprised, replied: "O, about 97." In good Welsh humor the student responded: "If you had let me recite, I'd have made 100." The professor joined in with the tumultuous glee of the class. Even so the student had a steady nerve and was skating on thin ice, in fact, *very* thin ice.

The use of humor was an outstanding characteristic of Dr. Robertson's teaching in the classroom and in the exposition of the New Testament in popular assemblies. One of his former Seminary mates, who afterward was a missionary, writes: "As a young man, Dr. Robertson had not developed the keen sense of humor which in after years made him so popular in the social circle and . . . among his students in the classroom." This acquired skill made him unique among Bible expositors. The usual style of lecturing in those days was the use of ponderous, accurate, theological language, uttered impressively and gravely, all of which often had a strongly soporific effect on the class or congregation. This style was part and parcel of the period of the double-breasted Prince Albert coat in the pulpit.

This young professor from the South had discarded the Prince Albert in which he was graduated and the heavy pulpit style of the day. He came up to East Northfield and Winona Lake and brought onto the platform of those Chautauqua-like assemblies, as in the Seminary lecture

rooms, a fresh breeze from the hills of Galilee and the mountains of Judea. The eager listeners, with imaginations quickened, minds illumined and sympathies aroused, caught a new and realistic view of the Story of the Gospel of Christ. The New Testament became a new and glowing book. The broad smile or even open laugh and applause did not seem out of place. The exposition of some great chapter or book of the New Testament became an emotional and spiritual experience not soon to be forgotten.

It must not be imagined, however, that this new style of teaching the New Testament was introduced without criticism. There are extant at least two letters—one written by a southern Baptist brother and one written by a Presbyterian pastor in the North—which uttered strong and poignantly expressed protests against this new method. The protestants felt that Dr. Robertson's humorous style of exposition bordered on, if it did not actually pass over into, "levity," which is the word used. Notwithstanding all, the success of the new method was its own justification. Not only were the classes and audiences kept from dozing while the deepest things of the Gospel of God were expounded, but they were usually kept in a rapt and devout frame of mind. Their spirits were borne upward into a fresher, life-giving atmosphere. They smiled, laughed, wept, and rejoiced in the Lord.

Evidence that Dr. Robertson's use of humor in Bible exposition was not actually overstepping the bounds of propriety is seen in the enthusiasm with which his Northfield and Winona Lake lectures were received by the leading preachers of the North and expositors of Britain who were themselves on the Assembly faculties. It was a new thing for

them and they rejoiced in it. It may be noted that numerous Presbyterian preachers were among his admirers, and wrote letters of high appreciation.

The story of these days, when Dr. Robertson was at the zenith of popularity as a teacher in the summer assemblies, is moving and at times amusing. This popularity went apace with his world-fame as a scholar and grammarian. As the throngs of summer visitors crowded his lectures, some of his rival lecturers and grammarians remained aloof. It was all so human, worldly, and pathetic. It was illustrative of the fact that all saints are not pure white, nor all sinners pure black, but that most of us are of some tint of moral gray. Those days were reminiscent also of the days on Jordan's banks when loyal hearers and adherents of a great religious leader were sorely perturbed over the fact that the other religious leader was having the bigger crowds. Current history often is but the recording of contemporary antiquity.

The most striking element in his teaching, perhaps, was that already alluded to—his power of making the New Testament live in his own heart and in that of the hearer. His apprehension of New Testament truth naturally was, first of all, intellectual, based on his profound knowledge of the language and of human nature. That knowledge was illuminated by a sane and sensitive imagination. All was quickened by the simple and childlike faith of which the Lord speaks.

His teaching was not pure intellectualism, common sense, poetry, or religious emotionalism. It was a combination of all these elements, plus something more. The forefathers had a quaint expression which has never been admitted

into good theological literature, which they employed when praying for reality in worship. They called it "a realizing sense." Dr. Robertson, in high degree, possessed that gift, or experience, which had been so sought for by the fathers. It may have bordered, at times, on the mystical experience of the prophets.

Having this experience himself, he had the naïve artistry, the unconscious power, of sharing this mystico-intellectual inner experience with his hearers. At times he was tremendous, overwhelming; but, naturally, not always. The body—that frail habitat and instrument of the soul—was not always in perfect health and fit. Yet those were days of great teaching, real teaching—which is the sharing with others of knowledge and experience, causing others to know and feel truth. After one of his great lectures the multitudes would go away feeling that they had seen and experienced the things of Christ and his apostles.

A flash of light is thrown upon this mystical side of this paradoxical man—which Dr. Robertson was—by one of his former students who had suffered at his hands and later came to love him. This hustling, bustling professor seemed never to have time enough for his work. The observing, thoughtful student could not reconcile this hurry with real devotion. He tells this revealing anecdote: "It was during New Testament days that I 'peeped' while he prayed. Students all probably remember how abruptly he would enter class, comment on the ventilation, castigate janitors in general, pass right on to 'Let us pray.' Then with a quick bow, a sort of ducking motion, he would utter a short sentence prayer. It sounded almost sacrilegious to me, so I decided to

'peep' to see as well as hear. How my eyes were opened! In that brief instant of prayer, he seemed literally to step into heaven. His face was transformed—gentle and sweet. He prayed in reality and truth. My love for him began then."

Those were the early days of the clash between the more modern views concerning the Bible and those of the older generation.

Dr. Robertson's attitude toward the Bible might be likened to the fundamental principle of American criminal law—that the accused is presumed to be innocent until proven guilty. He began with the assumption that the Bible is true, unless and until it is proved false and unworthy of confidence. It would seem that many others begin with the assumption that the Bible is false, or grossly faulty, till it can be proved trustworthy. Some scholars feel called to major on the defense or destruction of the New Testament. Dr. Robertson gave himself to its exposition. He would not wish to be tagged with either appellative "fundamentalist" or "modernist," though throughout life he stood for the defense of the Scriptures and was classed with the fundamentalists. He knew, however, all the arguments pro and contra the Bible. All he asked for was the truth, and he was intellectually honest enough to yield to conclusive evidence. He was a combination of the scholar and mystic, though he might not have confessed to the latter title.

His attitude toward the Bible was a strange and beautiful admixture of erudition and a childlike faith. Those who were in his home on that heart-breaking day when his beloved and unusually brilliant child, Charlotte, was taken, can never forget his grief and his sorely tested faith. He was



stunned beyond all words. He walked about the house helplessly with his open Greek New Testament in hand, reading the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter. Grief-stricken he said to his weeping friends: "He raised Jairus' daughter; why not mine?" Like multitudes of Christ's disciples through the ages, the learned scholar, along with the rest, came into a new fellowship with the Christ of Gethsemane and learned to pray the same prayer: "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt!"

The territory of his extension work as teacher stretched from Canada to Florida, and from the Atlantic States to the Pacific Slope. Friends from abroad hoped that he might also carry his teaching messages to the British Isles. The total of the distances traveled was enormous; and yet it cannot be said that he in a special way enjoyed travel, unless in the company of his family. His travel-letters were full of references to his desire to get back home. He was constantly counting the days till his return. In view of the strain of travel and of exhausting teaching in connection with his field work, one wonders at the physical endurance which carried him just beyond the allotted years of man. Besides all this, his class work increased with the years. In the later period of his life some of his classes numbered two hundred and fifty.

It was as a teacher that he began his remarkable career, and as a tired teacher he laid down his work in his last lecture which he could not quite finish.

It was in 1911 that Dr. Robertson achieved a new and rather sudden distinction as a popular Bible expositor in summer assemblies. The preceding years had been filled

with Bible conference work in all parts of the land. In 1907 he made his great lecture tour through the Middle and Far West to the Pacific Slope. This included expository lectures on the New Testament and preaching in Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Colorado, and California. He was received cordially everywhere, at times with enthusiasm, and greatly enjoyed the fellowship in sections of the country which were new to him. He spoke of one Northern community as "the Yankiest of the Yankee" which he had known. Besides he reveled in the grandeur of the Rocky Mountains—Mts. Shaster, Rainier, and Hood. He enjoyed the sight and flavor of the abundant and luscious fruits which he lists—oranges, olives, grapes, figs, apricots, apples, and peaches. He fell into the statistical language of the West, mentioning oleanders as large as apple trees, and geraniums eight feet tall. He concludes, after describing the wonder of it all, by saying that California was a fine state to visit, but Kentucky was the place for him!

Then came 1911, the most significant year for him up to that period. His heartening experiences began with the Baptist World Alliance meeting in June at Philadelphia, and ended with his first triumphs at Northfield.

As we have seen, Dr. Robertson had had an honorable part in bringing the Alliance into being. Indeed, so important had been his part that Secretary Shakespeare, in a letter to him, had referred to the Alliance as Dr. Robertson's "offspring." The first meeting had been held in London and the second in Philadelphia. Besides being on the Executive Committee which functions in the interims between the usual quinquennial meetings, he was a member of the

nominating committee at Philadelphia. That made him a key-man and much sought after. Naturally he could not satisfy all his friends while the political pot boiled. In apostolic fashion there arose conflicts over "the first place." Disappointments were bitter. Friendships were strained. Situations became grave. Dr. Robertson's position was a delicate one. The committee nominated Dr. R. S. MacArthur of New York as Alliance President to succeed Dr. Clifford of London.

Dr. Robertson delivered one of the principal addresses at an evening service. He was roundly applauded. Dr. F. B. Meyer of London was "enthusiastic," and Dr. Clifford "was like a boy over it." For months his correspondence echoed with praise from his brethren, though some doubted the propriety of his humor.

In New York in the first days of August he had most interesting experiences visiting and making the acquaintance of the staffs of the great publishing houses. He was seeking for a publisher of his "Big Grammar" which was almost finished. His Short Grammar had already carried his name afar, and he was becoming well-known in many lands. The publishers were becoming interested in him. He made pleasant contacts with the Scribner, Doran, Macmillan, Nelson, Armstrong, and Fleming Revell companies.

During this visit he met Mr. Paul Moody, the brother of W. R. Moody, director of the Northfield Conferences, who wrote the latter of Dr. Robertson's intended visit to the conference in August. As a result Mr. W. R. Moody wrote a cordial invitation to Dr. Robertson to visit them as guest and occasional speaker and be entertained along with the

Conference staff of lecturers. That was the beginning of a new day for him.

Mr. W. R. Moody, Director of the Northfield Conferences, brought annually from Great Britain a group of outstanding preachers, authors, and Bible expositors. It was a liberal education to attend these conferences and hear the best of Bible exposition of that day. That year the faculty included Dr. J. A. Hutton of Glasgow, Dr. J. Stuart Holden of London, Dr. G. A. Johnston Ross of Montreal, Dr. G. Campbell Morgan of London, and Dr. Torrey of Chicago. The attitude of certain British leaders regarding the ability of American preachers and scholars had been expressed in a letter by an outstanding British Baptist who, before the Philadelphia Alliance meeting, said that he had been informed that there was not an American Baptist preacher of sufficient ability and culture to be the Alliance President and that, therefore, they would have to seek for a suitable layman.

It was into the midst of such a group of Britishers, who did not hesitate to excoriate even some of their very greatest leaders, that he was thrust and among whom he had to make his way. They were great men and good men with an ample sense of their own worth, along with the gift of frankness. He had this in his favor. He had written books that had already wrung praise from their greatest scholars. These visitors found that the author of *Short Grammar* and *The Glory of the Ministry* was among them and proceeded to take his measure.

He had not originally been asked to be on the Conference faculty of that year. He was a windfall for Mr. Moody. No one knew how he would "rate." Some, who later became his



dearest friends, were at first "stiff and formal," others were more or less friendly. They sat back of him on the platform as he rose to deliver his first unscheduled lecture on *Paul's Proverbial Philosophy*. At supper one evening he heard these Britishers reduce one of the most famous scholars of the British Non-conformists to very small bits, and not very beautiful bits at that. The American scholar sat rather dumb-founded as he witnessed the procedure. There they sat at his back—these same distinguished brethren—looking on and listening—weighing him in the balances. The audience was the largest yet. The situation could not be called exactly inspiring for the newcomer. The fact was that Dr. Bob was at a disadvantage. He was tired physically after a long summer's work, including the strain of Philadelphia. He had not prepared for this occasion. His voice was somewhat husky. However, courageously, he launched out into the deep, with faith in God, as he said. Soon he had the audience with him. But what were those Britishers, sitting just behind him, thinking of him? His throat became dry; but a lemon helped him.

At last it was all over. Some of the platform people spoke kindly. The singers and the congregation crowded up and spoke cheerfully, even enthusiastically. But that British contingent and the outstanding American expositor were silent and went out. He went to his room, rather dejected, and then later joined the others of the faculty at a late fruit supper served by Mrs. Moody. At last the ice was all thawed out. One of the group, an American, expressed the desire that his son might attend Dr. Bob's Greek class in the Seminary. The Britishers also wished that they themselves might



take a six months' course under him. What higher praise could a professor of Greek ask? They proceeded then to speak in glowing words of his books, and quoted the praise of other scholars in Britain. The ice being all melted, winter became glorious summer. The visitors, at last, were cordiality itself. They had only been acting in the British way.

Writing of this unexpected experience, he said: "The fellowship has been very rare and high. . . . I am in the midst of the British leaders as one of them. . . ." They had become actually "chummy." He added: "I am quite undone and literally humbled by God's goodness. . . . It all seems like a dream." As he left on the train, he wrote: "They have broken me all up this morning. . . . In some ways it has been the most remarkable summer of my life. . . . I feel as if I have made a turn in my career and have entered upon a new stage in my life." He dwelt on those "happy days of high converse with God's noblemen," and concludes in solemn strain: "It is His hand as plainly as can be." This was his first victory at Northfield, but not the last. Dr. Hutton, years later, said publicly at a Summer Assembly that Robertson "stood above all men in the world as an interpreter of the Epistles, and in all such conferences he was first."

### AN INNOVATION

Doctor Bob captured Northfield in 1911 and consolidated his gains in 1912 and the following four years. The great step in advance was *the teaching of the New Testament from the Greek text in hand*. It is claimed that Dr. Robertson wore out a dozen Greek Testaments in his lifetime. It

was the technique of the Seminary classroom, taken over into a popular assembly, the majority of whom were laymen and women who knew no Greek. It was a new thing in the popular exposition of the Scripture.

The reasons leading up to this decision seem to have been varied. It was probably Johnston Ross of Toronto (later of New York) who had suggested the idea to Mr. Moody, who in turn adopted it and requested Dr. Robertson to try it out the following year. Dr. Len G. Broughton later claimed that he had first suggested the idea to Dr. Robertson. However it may have been, it was while he was *en route* to Northfield in 1912 that Doctor Bob came to his final decision. On August 5th, he wrote: "I feel in the grip of destiny and God, and pray constantly for God's help. . . . I begin to feel rather clearly that I should use the Greek pretty steadily in my lectures." Later, referring to the same matter, he adds: "So, the Rubicon is crossed and the start made."

After getting into action and lecturing to the multitudes with Seminary methods and in popular language, the wisdom of the experiment was fully demonstrated by the enthusiasm with which it was received. The other members of the Assembly faculty marveled at his ability to combine accuracy of scholarship with a winsome popular style. Dr. Johnston Ross remarked that these lectures "marked a new era at Northfield," and added that only Dr. J. Rendel Harris of Birmingham, England, was anything like Dr. Robertson as scholar and lecturer.

That year his labors were a severe test of his physical powers, for he had already had a hard summer of lecturing

before reaching Northfield. Besides, his beloved daughter, Charlotte, was gravely ill of typhoid at home, which was a sore trial.

The greatest event of another kind in his life marked the year 1912—about the middle of February—*the completion of the writing of the "Big Grammar,"* after continued labors of more than a quarter of a century. It was not printed, however, till two years later.

His increasing fame in these days came from three sources, any one of which would be sufficient distinction for any man. As author of twelve popular religious books he was known and honored on both sides of the Atlantic. His grammars placed him among the outstanding Greek scholars of his day. As accurate and popular expositor of the New Testament he had no superior. It was enough glory to daze and humble any man. No wonder he felt at times as if in a dream.

Like the Christian army he went from victory unto victory. Just as the year 1912 was a great advance over all previous years so the next three years marked new victories, his audiences numbering at times two thousand and even more. He wrote: "Northfield has become one of the *foci* of my usefulness." He doubtless was thinking of the Seminary as the other. Not only did his lectures continue to attract large crowds, but his fellows on the Northfield faculty—Drs. Hutton, Holden, and J. D. Jones—were in "ecstatic enthusiasm" and urged him to write New Testament commentaries.

During this year he acquired, among others, two new and devoted friends and admirers: J. D. Jones, Congregational

pastor of Bournemouth, England, and Dan Crawford. The former was of Welsh origin, whom Doctor Bob described as "a quiet preacher of choice language, elevated ideas and great vigor of thought." He was gifted also with a melodious voice, and charmed the great congregations of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York on Sundays. The other friend was described as "the unclassifiable, indescribable Dan Crawford." He had just recently returned to England after twenty-three years' missionary service in Africa, and was soon going back to his beloved black brethren with no intention of ever returning to his native land. The correspondence between Dan Crawford and Archibald Robertson indicated what might be termed an ecstatic friendship. Each seemed to understand the other with a perfect understanding and approval of the other's extraordinary gifts. Crawford's *Thinking Black* was so appreciative of the Negro Soul that the writer of these lines recalls that, after reading that remarkable book, he had a nebulous feeling that the Creator had done him injustice in not permitting him to be born with a darker hue.

Those hectic days at Northfield, so full of labors, success, glory, and the joy of serving, do not show us the whole man that Robertson was, Reading his letters and listening to the comments of his friends might lead us to surmise that work was about the only thing in life that he enjoyed. But there was another Doctor Bob. *En route* to Florida in this period, on a luxurious train, he gave expression in a letter to the most unRobertsonian paragraph in all his correspondence. He said: "Not to be in a hurry, with no class to meet, no sermon to preach, no Grammar to write, no article to

write, no business to attend to. . . . *It is luxurious!!*" That natural, normal exclamation brings him down to earth among common mortals for the nonce.

On another occasion he showed that he could relax and rest. While in Newark, N. J., in 1915, he wrote: "I have done little but loll and doze and have day-dreams of my boyhood in the long ago. I feel a strange stirring of my blood as I get among the hills of the Atlantic slope." On his birthday in 1920 he wrote: "I shall do a lot of nothing this week."

But there had been but little of such relaxation in the first half of 1912. During these lecture-days out in the field he seemed to be pulled apart by two forces—the desire to do his best in pleasing the Lord and the brethren, and to get back home. One of his favorite pastimes when "on the road" was calculating how many days it would be before he would start home. In one of his letters he gives expression to one of his loveliest Irishisms. He said: "I am a home-body and not much of a traveler. *The chief joy that today brings is that tomorrow evening I start home.*" The Emerald Isle couldn't beat that.

His great era at Northfield lasted from 1911 to 1916. He had become an institution there. Director Moody even spoke in pleasant humor of his "vested interests" there. *Zion's Herald* of August 11, 1915, said: "Five years ago Dr. Robertson came to Northfield as one of the preachers. His genius as an exegetical and popular interpreter of the Bible was quickly seen. . . . His New Testament Greek class with his rapid fire of wit and humor, together with his clear knowledge of the Greek, has grown more popular each year,



long since outgrowing the Sage Chapel, and demanding the auditorium for the crowds who wish to attend."

At the close of the lectures in 1916, the class did the unusual thing of thanking him in a formal way, and by vote expressed the hope that he would return next year. Then they bade him farewell with tears, that reminded the reporter of the parting of Paul from his brethren at Miletus.

Something, however, happened, and he was not invited back the next year: but after two years he was back again; and again still later, with the result that in the period of twenty-one years (1911-32) Dr. Robertson was at Northfield twelve times. Usually on his lecture tours he counted the days until his return home. It was *not* thus at Northfield. In 1924 he wrote: "The days fly by all too quickly at Northfield."

It was during his lectures that year that he came to know Dr. Simpson of New College at Edinburgh who knew intimately Stalker, Mackintosh, Kennedy, and James Black. He was full of enthusiasm over Alexander Whyte and his great Sunday evening class of eight hundred men. They talked of George Matheson and his great hymn. Dr. Simpson related that Miss Grace Hall, Matheson's fiancée, told his mother that just after she had broken the engagement because he was going blind, Matheson went home and wrote, "O, Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go." Dr. Robertson was so much interested that he wrote it up and published it, and now it is recorded history.

It should be recorded here that in those same years Winona Lake even outranked Northfield as the scene of Doctor Bob's great labors. Often, at the close of the North-

field conferences, he and a goodly number of the faculty moved from Massachusetts to Indiana, and continued their labors and "high fellowship."

He continued this type of work with enthusiasm till a short time before his death. On the occasion of one of his returns to his beloved Northfield, when speaking of his joy in the work, he remarked that it was as if "the old Northfield days" had returned.

So prolific and even prodigious were his labors out in this field of activity that one of the co-editors of a Southern Baptist paper expressed surprise that he could find the time from his Seminary duties for such a service. It was a covert criticism of his extended absences from his Seminary work. The senior editor, however, disavowed the editorial note. He joined with hosts of others in declaring that Dr. Robertson's teaching work among the pastors and laymen was so profoundly valuable that it might even be considered his greatest contribution to the work of the Kingdom. In fact some of his former students, filling high and important denominational positions, declared that they in later years had received more benefit from his lectures in conference work than from his class work in the Seminary. This was partly because they could appreciate him better.

The depth and range of this extra-Seminary teaching was seen in cordial and even enthusiastic response on the part of Christian leaders outside his own denomination. An official of a seminary of another church wrote that he wished to "light his small torch at [A.T.R.'s] blazing fire." One Presbyterian minister wondered how he could be so good a Presbyterian, while remaining so loyal a Baptist. Another

Presbyterian expressed it inversely: "For so good a Baptist, you are about the best Presbyterian I know." He was likewise cordially received by Methodists, Lutherans, Episcopalians and others. An Episcopalian rector wrote to express his great regret that A.T.R. had not been at Northfield the previous year and hoped he would not fail to be there that year. Dean Tillett of Vanderbilt University wrote: "We feel that you belong to all of us," and Professor Machen of Princeton declared he had never seen such "a combination of scholarship and popular power."

His historico-expository teaching reached its zenith in the Stone Lectures delivered at Princeton University. This distinction came to him twice, being a signal testimonial to his standing as a scholar and expositor. His first course was delivered in February, 1915, on *The Pharisees and Jesus*; the second series was given in November, 1926, on *Paul and the Intellectuals*, being an exposition of the Epistle to the Colossians.

During the severe summer of his last year (1934) he continued this extension work almost to the last. Dr. Curtis Lee Laws rather plaintively wrote from the scene of his former triumphs: "It does not seem like Northfield without you." His lectures at Butler University Institute were considered "the finest feature." He gave four lectures at Stony Brook Assembly in August. Three weeks before the end, Dr. Scarborough of Southwest Seminary invited him to visit and lecture. He wrote: "I certainly congratulate you on your wonderful strength." (!)

His teaching days were nearly spent. He returned to his beloved Seminary and took up once more his work of

teaching. He had three weeks left. Almost literally he went from his cathedra to his throne which is promised to "him that overcometh."

The following is a description of "Doctor Bob" in action as teacher, as told by a former student who later came to know him as father:<sup>1</sup>

"The large class of one hundred fifty or more students was regularly in its seats well before the second buzz of the buzzer sounded. A few seconds after that electrical device sent forth its abrupt and unpleasant sound, one of the leaves of the big double door near the front of the room would swing open and in would hurry A.T.R.—"Dr. Bob," as he was familiarly called—somewhat out of breath from his climb to the second floor classroom from his office one flight down. His arms were full of books—a roll book, a large note-book, containing his lecture notes, his "Jesus book," as he called his *Epochs in the Life of Jesus*, a copy of his *Syllabus for N. T.*, and his *Harmony of the Gospels*.

"Unloading his arms of the books he always looked at the windows to see that the room was properly ventilated and especially to see that no draft was blowing in upon him. If the day was cold he would always take a look at the thermometer that hung near his desk. The ventilation and the thermometer attended to, he would clasp the edges of the little box-like stand that rested on his desk to make it of convenient height for use by one standing, and abruptly say, 'Let us pray.' And then, without waiting for the class to get its heads down, he would begin. His tone was deeply reverential and humble, but his words were rapid. They

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Allen Easley.

were simple and to the point. Usually they expressed gratitude, for the blessings of the day and recognized the call to duty.

"The prayer over, he turned at once to the calling of the roll and to the reading of any excuses that might have been placed on his desk by men who had not prepared their lessons and feared they might be called on. Then came the assignment of the lesson for the next meeting of the class, from the syllabus as a basis. Here were references to the Bible, to his Harmony, to Josephus, to Broadus' Commentary on Matthew, and many other books.

"Then calling for books to be closed, he scanned his class roll, while the students waited in suspense to see who the first victim would be. Running his eye down one, two, three pages of his roll book, he at length fixed upon a man who had either not been called on that quarter or had done quite poorly on his recitation.

"Having fixed upon his man, he would say with the solemnity of a judge summoning a prisoner to his feet to be sentenced, 'Mr. Blank, will you recite?' Brother Blank stands, bracing himself for the worst.

"'Brother Blank, what is the title of the lesson?'

"Brother Blank, clearing his throat for time, replies weakly, 'The lesson is about the healing of the man who was let down through the roof.'

"'Yes, but what is the title of the lesson?'

"'I don't remember.'

"'Well, did you ever know? That will do.'

"Mr. Blank sits down in mortification and with not a little resentment, as Dr. Bob records a mark against the



name of Mr. Blank as all the class can see. There is no question in any one's mind that it is an F—a failure.

“The question that was missed by one man was regularly passed on to another and another until it was adequately answered. Then after receiving the right answer, he would often stop and explain why some of the earlier replies were unsatisfactory. There were always reasons that appeared adequate to most of the class when once they were pointed out.

“Some twenty or thirty minutes of the hour and a half period were given to oral quizzing. During this time probably eight or ten persons were called on.

“Dr. Bob's manner was blunt and abrupt. He was manifestly working under pressure and against time. If a man did not know the answer to the question asked he was passed up without ceremony, and a failure recorded against him. But with all of his brusqueness Dr. Robertson was essentially an easy man to recite to, if one had studied his lesson, and watched the working of the professor's mind. More than half the problem of reciting was in observing the movement of his thought and taking account of what it was he was after. If a man took that in and started out in the right direction, even if he could not travel very far, the chances were that R. would take the floor away from his student. He did not have patience enough to wait for the student to make the journey in his slow fashion. R. would take it and go. The student would get the benefit in his grade of R.'s good answer. But the student had to get started in the right direction on his own.

“But woe betide the student who tried to get smart or who

undertook to substitute his pious moralizing, or spiritualizing for the facts of the assignment under consideration. He was very soon shut up.

“Questions by members of the class were tolerated, but not encouraged. No one got the impression that Dr. Bob was afraid of questions, but that he had so much to crowd into the hour and a half that he had little time for interruptions. The stupid question, or the question of obvious answer, was dispensed with in short order. But questions that were pertinent to the subject and clearly arose out of serious study were given direct, pointed answers, without equivocation or evasion.

“His lectures were minutely outlined and his method of delivery approached dictation to the class. One could not take down all that he said in long hand, but there was no serious difficulty in getting the outline and enough of the development of each point to recall it satisfactorily.

“In my seminary days the Reverend W. E. Davidson published in mimeographed form Dr. Robertson’s lecture notes as Mr. Davidson took them down in class, but a student was not permitted to purchase a copy of the notes until he had himself completed the New Testament English course and each purchaser was in honor bound to see to it that his copy of the notes did not fall into the hands of some student in Dr. Robertson’s N. T. class.

What were the strong points in Dr. Bob’s teaching?

“1. He was *interesting*. His lectures were never dull. They sparkled with wit. They were concrete, vivid, graphic. They moved on with speed and expedition. He spoke in simple,

homely, and vivid English. His presentations were concrete rather than abstract.

"2. He was a superb master of his specialty—the New Testament. No paragraph or verse had escaped his notice. He recognized every passage in its setting. He, however, made no show of having memorized the N. T. He knew what were the possible interpretations of each passage and had good authority for his own preferred interpretations. Students realized that they were getting something for their time in coming to his classes.

"3. He made the N. T. live. The enemies of Jesus, the disciples, and Jesus himself came alive. Students felt the presence of these persons. The N. T. became a new and living book to them. A student will never forget his Rabbi Smell-Fungus, and Rabbi Dry-as-Dust, and how Dr. Bob made him see Jesus calling on the man with the withered hand to stretch it out right under Rabbi Smell-Fungus's nose.

"4. Then too there was a depth of love for Jesus. No one could be in his class long before he felt the fervor of a truly devout spirit. Jesus was very real to him and he loved him dearly.

"5. Furthermore there was a love for the students and a craving for the students to do their very best. He had a love for young ministers. Students came to realize that his chastening was the chastening of love and not of resentment. His lectures were full of homely advice for them.

"From Davidson's notes I copy the following rather typical passage: 'He (Jesus) really had something to say, something worth hearing in his sermons—that was what was new about it. They (the Jewish people) had been hearing

dry-as-dust sermons with no message for the present day. Now they hear how they can live the new life. Try getting some new ideas, and pouring them out upon the people—by the barrel. See if they do not open up themselves to hear.’ ”

## CHAPTER V

### THE AUTHOR

Dr. Robertson had two families—the children of his home and those of his brain—each peculiarly dear to him on its own plane. The writer recalls the lively interest which Mark Twain evinced when visiting his old home town of Hannibal, Missouri, when he learned in conversation that his first brain-child, *Innocents Abroad*, was born the same year as that of the birth of my mother's only son. Presumably all authors have a parent's feeling for their books, especially for those which were born of travail. If that is the mark of a brain-child then the "Big Grammar" was superlatively such an one. The other forty-four books also elicited the parental feeling, each in its own order.

Dr. Robertson wrote forty-five books including two posthumous works. His first one was published in 1900 and the last in 1937. This was an average of more than a book a year for a third of a century. Practically all, except *Life and Letters of John A. Broadus*, were on the general subject of the Greek New Testament. His "Big Grammar" of fifteen hundred pages was equal in size to ten books of one hundred and fifty pages each, and each packed tight with erudition. The fact is, therefore, that Doctor Bob published the equivalent of some fifty-four books in thirty years. He began to write books at the age of thirty-eight,



and ended at seventy, though he was hard at a huge task of translation when he was taken.

To the above output we may add his articles of scholarly and permanent value in *Hastings' Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, *Standard Bible Dictionary*, *Hastings' Dictionary of the Apostolic Age*, and *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. He was also an editor of *The 1911 Bible*. He was manager of *Review and Expositor*, and an assiduous and brilliant reviewer of books, which phase of his many-sided life greatly pleased his British friends.

Adding to all this, the stream of contributed articles to the religious press, all through the forty-six years of his professorship, we conclude that few, if any, of his contemporaries gave to the world so great a volume of sacred scholarship. His erudite friends on both sides of the Atlantic continually expressed their amazement at his capacity for literary work of such high quality. In the period of thirty-four years there were only eight years in which no book of his appeared.

Some of his intimate friends and admirers doubted the wisdom of this excessive volume of literary work. They felt that it might have been better to write more sparingly and carefully. But this is a matter for consideration from several angles.

His books fall into four natural groups, though the classification is not rigid: Grammars, Expositions, History, and Character Studies.

Of these forty-five volumes a goodly number may yet have a long span of life. We begin with the "Big Grammar." This was the stock from which most of his life-work

stemmed. With the exception of his first, all his books, we might say, were shoots from that great trunk. In nature a vigorous tree has many off-shoots, some being strong and enduring branches, while some are less permanent sprouts. Doctor Bob published twelve books before the "Big Grammar" appeared. Two of these were preliminary studies leading up to the larger work—the *Syllabus* and *Short Grammar*. They served their day with distinction until their light was absorbed largely in that of the greater luminary. Of the remaining nine volumes four will continue for some time to minister to Bible students—*Epochs in the Life of Jesus*, *Epochs in the Life of Paul*, *The Glory of the Ministry*, and *The Student's Chronological New Testament*.

During the twenty years following the appearance of the "Big Grammar" in 1914, he wrote thirty-one books. Of these, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (6 vols.) will probably be used for decades to come by Bible students, since they are commentaries on all the books of the New Testament in an unusual and convenient form. The two series of Stone Lectures will retain their place in religious literature, being subjects of permanent interest.

When judging this matter of Dr. Robertson's vast literary output, we must remember that an author is like a gardener. There are two types of books—the permanent and the occasional. Books are like flowers—some are "perennials" and others "annuals." The former are written for all time, like a great grammar, history or commentary. Such were his "Big Grammar" and *Word Pictures*. Others are written because of certain favorable circumstances, and render a service for a brief season and pass, oftentimes with the first edition.

They had their day and ceased to be. That is not to say that their appearance was a mistake. The brevity of their day is no more lamentable than that of the life of brilliant editorials and articles in great journals and magazines. Such literary flowers are rightly to be classed with the author's "annuals."

His story, as an author, discloses the interesting fact that after fame came to him the great publishing houses vied with each other for his manuscripts, as his correspondence demonstrates. They knew they could sell anything he wrote. The unusual volume of his writings was due, therefore, to at least three factors—his extraordinary facility in writing, the spiritual joy of sharing with others the superabundance of his rich scholarly material, and the readiness of the public to purchase and read his books. The synchronizing of these three factors would make a prolific writer of anyone, while the absence of any one element would be a serious deterrent.

His books remind one of an ever present question in industry—*what to do with the by-products?* The highly intelligent industrialist will seek to find use for the vast accumulations of materials of the dump-heap. At times the by-products become the main products. So it was in connection with the production of the "Big Grammar." Dr. Robertson had at his disposal an abundance of accumulated and precious knowledge concerning all phases of the Christian movement of the first century. Naturally he felt it was a pity to waste it. The using up of this rich material may have been an example of his Scottish trait of economy, manifesting itself in the spiritual realm. At any rate, he used up his



A. T. ROBERTSON IN MIDDLE LIFE  
Taken about 1903





by-product materials pretty thoroughly and the reading public absorbed them and was thereby enriched.

His friends frequently cautioned him against overstraining his powers. Yet his correspondence shows that Professor Zahn of Erlanger, Germany, in his eighty-first year was still hoping to write another volume; and Dr. Robertson's good friend, Professor Lock of Oxford, at seventy-four, was planning more literary output. This question of whether the husbanding of our strength over a longer period or letting the zeal of the Lord's house consume us is the wiser course, can never be settled. It must be confessed that Dr. Robertson's output of work for God would have been unusual even for a nonagenarian.

Ten years before his death, admiring friends began to urge him to make a translation of the whole New Testament. At first he refused, saying he would never again attempt a major literary task. But the call and urge were too strong. He was working on such a translation the day he laid down his pen for the last time.

## THE ROBERTSON SHELF OF BOOKS

### GRAMMARS

1. *Syllabus for New Testament*, 1900.
2. *A Short Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 1908.  
Translations: Italian, 1910; French, 1911; German, 1911; Dutch, 1912. New edition with Davis, 1931. Ninth edition.
3. *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 1914. (5 editions).
4. *Syllabus for New Testament Study*, 1923 (with Dr. Davis).

## COMMENTARIES AND "STUDIES"

1. *The Teaching of Jesus Concerning God the Father*, 1903.
2. *Key Words in the Teachings of Jesus*, 1906.
3. *Commentary on Matthew* (The Bible for Home and School), 1911.
4. *The Glory of the Ministry*, 1911.
5. *Studies in the New Testament*, 1915.  
Translations: Japanese, 1922; Spanish, 1925; Rumanian, 1928; Chinese, 1933.
6. *Practical and Social Aspects of Christianity*, 1915: Studies in the Epistle of James.
7. *Paul's Joy in Christ*, 1917: Studies in Philippians.
8. *The New Citizenship*, 1919.
9. *Studies in Mark's Gospel*, 1919.
10. *A Translation of Luke's Gospel*, 1923.
11. *Studies in the Text of the New Testament*, 1926.
12. *Paul and the Intellectuals*: The Epistle to the Colossians; The Stone Lectures for 1926.
13. *Passing on the Torch*, 1934.
14. *Jesus as a Soul-Winner* (Posthumous), 1937.

*Word Pictures in the New Testament* (6 vols.):

15. Vol. I—Matthew and Mark, 1930.
16. Vol. II—Luke, 1930.
17. Vol. III—Acts, 1930.
18. Vol. IV—The Epistles of Paul, 1931.
19. Vol. V—The Fourth Gospel and Epistle to the Hebrews, 1932.
20. Vol. VI—The General Epistles and the Apocalypse, 1933.

## HISTORY

1. *The Life and Letters of John A. Broadus*, 1901.
2. *Bibliography for New Testament Greek*, 1903.
3. *The Student's Chronological New Testament*, 1904.
4. *Epochs in the Life of Jesus*, 1907. Tr. into Spanish.
5. *Epochs in the Life of Paul*, 1909.
6. *A Harmony of the Gospels*, 1922. Tr. into Spanish.
7. *New Testament History. Air-plane View*, 1924.
8. *The Christ of the Logia*, 1924.
9. *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 1925.
10. *Epochs in the Life of Peter*, 1933.
11. *Epochs in the Life of the Apostle John*, 1935 (Posthumous)

## CHARACTER STUDIES

1. *John the Loyal*, 1911.
2. *Making Good in the Ministry: A Sketch of John Mark*, 1918.
3. *The Divinity of Christ in the Gospel of John*, 1916.
4. *The Pharisees and Jesus (The Stone Lectures)*, 1916.
5. *Luke the Historian in the Light of Research*, 1920.
6. *Paul the Interpreter of Christ*, 1921.
7. *Types of Preachers in the New Testament*, 1922.
8. *The Mother of Jesus: Her Problems and Her Glory*, 1925.  
Tr. into Spanish.
9. *Some Minor Characters in the New Testament*, 1928.
10. *The Minister and His Greek New Testament*, 1923.

## SUMMARY

Grammars .....	4
Commentaries .....	20
History .....	11
Character Studies .....	10
Total .....	<hr/> 45

## CHAPTER VI

### OXFORD

by ELLA BROADUS ROBERTSON

A trip to England, "to work at the *Big Grammar*," had long been planned, and was finally about to come to pass in 1905. We were to sail late in January on the *Baltic*. But three days before that date, the children broke out with scarlet fever. The trip was put off seven weeks, but finally we all sailed on the *Cedric* on March 13th, landed in Liverpool, saw our first cathedral in Onesler, and reached Oxford on the first of April. We put up at the Isis, on Iffley Road. The four American children were received somewhat dubiously, as we expected. We had warned them on the steamer that, besides other reasons for being good, they must now be a credit to their country, for English people thought all American children were bad, and they must show them better. Soon everyone was enjoying them. Hattie, the beloved colored nurse, created a pleasant interest, and had a wonderful time.

The diary for the first day reads:

In the morning to the Baptist chapel in the New Road, heard Mr. Dann. In the afternoon, through beautiful Christ Church meadows to the Cathedral service. A Burne-Jones window in memory of Dean Liddell's daughter Edith, with a most touching Latin inscription—the last line, "Ave dulcissima, dilectissima

Ave." Afterwards heard Mark Guy Pearse in the Methodist church.

*Tuesday.* To the Bodleian and the Radcliffe Camera. The librarian, Mr. Nicholson, had a round with A. about the Greek Aorist and Perfect. (When I asked if I could sit with my husband and read, he screwed a formidable monocle, looked me over, and said, "Not unless you yourself are engaged in some serious work!" Before long I had a request for a Club paper the next October on "Recent Work in Criticism," which sounded serious enough for anybody, so I got my reader's ticket also.) . . . London! Just a day, but that was a great deal. Lunched at the Holborn Restaurant, saw Mr. Chamberlain or his double. Went to Baptist Church House, met Mr. Alfred Shakespeare and Dr. Whitley—very kind—the building quite handsome. Sought out several publishers, and had a blissful 15 minutes in St. Paul's.

*Saturday.* Ashmoleon Museum. Went to deliver our notes and cards of introduction. (These brought many calls and invitations to tea, and other courtesies.) . . . Somerville a charming sweet retreat. Into the gardens of Balliol and Trinity, which will be a boon to the children, at least till term begins. (Their main delight came to be Magdalen Gardens with the deer in the Park, the black swans and Addison's walk.)

*Mon. 10th.* Miss Weld came by, had just gotten our cards, and "hoped we would come to tea at half past four." So, we went, in the rain. She met us at the gate. (After forty years, I remember her greeting: "Are you the friends of my dear friend, Mr. Trumbull?") Her drawing-room has a lovely view, and is full of pretty old things, and books much read. She is simple and sweet and unworldly, a person who lives for other people; eager to do something for us. (We found she knew Oxford thoroughly; her mother, lately dead, was a sister of Lady Tenny-



son. She could read off hieroglyphic inscriptions, taught by Dr. Sayce. She took us out to tea once at Cumnor Hall, and got us invitations to a garden-party at beautiful Blenheim Palace. She liked the children. She wrote an article the next winter on Tennyson, for the Review and Expositor.)

*Wed.* The whole family went to see Christ Church College. A. called on Dr. Sayce, while we looked at the great Hall, with its noble proportions, fine windows and portraits. The Cathedral I begin to take in. A statue of Liddell on the north side of the great arch. In afternoon, A. and I went into the quadrangles of All Souls, Queen's and University Colleges. These beautiful quadrangles are themselves like cathedrals.

*Thurs.* Miss Weld took A. to tea at Dr. Grenfell's, and I explored Wedham College and Gardens by myself. . . . It must be a cedar of Lebanon, that mighty and solemn presence in Wadham Gardens. It was like hearing the Ten Commandments read in church.

*25th. Tues.* A. and I went to tea with the Margoliouths. Mr. Rogers there, and a very high-bred old gentleman, Mr. Trevelyan, a cousin of the one who wrote Macaulay's Life. Had quite a good talk with him. Coming home, stopped at Keble, Manchester and Mansfield. At the last met Dr. Fairbairn, the Principal.

*May 1.* Arrived, Sheik Shawwush, an Arab; professor here; just back from Algiers; very talkative.

*May 1-4.* A. went to see the conferring of degrees—very entertaining. At twelve both went to hear Dr. Sanday's lecture. To tea at Miss Weld's, to meet Dr. Lock, the Warden of Keble; delightful, something like Dr. Stalker. The Danns called.

*Sunday, 7th.* To second Bampton lecture, then to Mansfield College, to hear Dr. Paterson, Edinburgh. A wonderful sermon, on "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid,

that shall not be known." Met the Fairbairns and the Smiths. Dr. S. was at Northfield and Chautauqua in 1888. Mr. R. dined in New College with Dr. Margoliouth and enjoyed it greatly.

9th. To Worcester to hear Mr. Hadow on The Ethics of Aristotle. A lovely Hall, the men seated at tables, while he marched up and down, in and out, lecturing vigorously—very bracing. Then Dr. Sanday. At 2 to Miss Weld, walked to the country to hear the nightingales in a copse near Headington Hall.

10th. A day of lectures. Dr. Fairbairn, Dr. Sautar and Dr. Bartlett at Mansfield. To tea at the Danns'; then met Miss Weld at the Schools and went up to hear Prof. Welldon on the laws of inheritance—green peas, yellow peas; Galton's theory and Mendel's.

Dr. Raleigh on English Grammar and idioms: "We live in the age of the school-marm." He defended "It's me" (as my father did). He rapped on the desk, "Who's there?" "It's me!" "I think only the King should say, "It is I!" Dr. Lock on I Timothy. Nice luncheon in Exeter with Mr. Tandy (a Ky. Rhodes scholar). The Berlin String Quartette, Joachim and three others. Lovely and melodious as the nightingales in the thicket.

Against this background of beauty and friendliness we kept on learning things. There were lectures on every kind of subject: The Homeric Age (Dr. Myers); The Artemis of Pompeii (Percy Gardner); Big Game in the Rockies (Mr. Peele); Anthony and Cleopatra (Dr. Bradley). Dr. Flinders Petrie, just returned from Palestine, had new slides of the Sinai country, and a new theory about the number of the Israelites. We heard Dr. Sayce several times, and one lecture was claimed for the *Review and Expositor*, "Life in Palestine in the Time of Abraham." Mr. Robertson,

of course, heard a good many more than I—Dr. Rashdall, Dr. Driver, Dr. Ottley. He was present at the conferring of degrees on Dr. Ray Lankester and Dr. Osler. He dined many times in Hall with different professors, and had tea or lunch with others; sometimes I was included. (I remember especially Dr. Sanday, who asked my opinion of the separation of Norway and Sweden that week!) He went to the Oxford Union, to the Oxfordshire Baptist Union, and the Bunyan Society, where he met Dr. Timothy Richards, famous and beloved English Baptist missionary to China. He spoke at New Road on the occasion of an ordination, on “The Modern Baptist Preacher”; and at the Association meeting on “Home Mission Problems and Methods in the States.” He was heard with much interest. His regular lecture courses were under Dr. Sanday and Dr. Fairbairn. We heard memorable sermons at Mansfield by Dr. Denny and Hugh Black. We were asked home for luncheon by the Fairbairns to meet Dr. Denny. Mrs. Fairbairn even asked me to bring my children to see her, and made them have a good time, when they went.

All this time, the digging away in the Bodleian Library was steady and fruitful and the correspondence with several of these new acquaintances proved valuable for years afterwards. Just before we left Oxford, Dr. Robertson entertained six or eight of them at a luncheon at the Randolph Hotel—apparently an unprecedented deed, but none the less successful and delightful.

We were lucky in seeing the Eights from a college barge, visiting round sociably on other barges; in seeing Murray’s new English Dictionary in the making—dozens of diction-

aries open at the same word on an endless shelf round the room. Dr. Murray asked us about several words growing obsolete, or quite so; one was "pert" in the sense of lively. There were beautiful concerts at several colleges, one at Keble. "Dr. Lock stayed with us all the evening; beautiful chorus and orchestra, fairy illuminations in the quadrangle; ices and promenade during the interlude."

We met Miss Ellen Semple, a distinguished lady from Louisville, had her to lunch, found she knew Dr. Sayce and went with her to his tea at Queen's in the common room. Mr. Abercrombie and his beautiful wife, the Baroness de Milette, and her niece. Dr. Sayce fused us all nicely with his pleasant talk and manners. Showed us the Library, Egyptian collection, first editions of *Paradise Lost* and *P. Regained*, *Audubon's Birds*, etc. A. dined with Dr. Myers in Christ Church Hall; delightful talk.

There were various courtesies exchanged with Rhodes scholars, who were new in those days. Once we had Hattie make beaten biscuits for tea, which brought shouts of pleasure. On an excursion down the river with the Non-conformist ministers and their wives we saw Nuneham Park and Dorchester Abbey. While waiting under a tree for the boat to bring us back, my husband was called on for an Uncle Remus story, "The Tar-Baby," which nobody there had ever heard properly spoken—"sezee" and "behime-leg" were Greek to them. (No, they all knew Greek!)

Before we left we went to Cambridge for one day. The diary shows seven colleges visited, the Backs of course, and the University Library. We saw Codex D and Wyclif's Bible; met Dr. Swete and others.

The last day of all came the beautiful garden-party at Blenheim Palace, quite different from anything else.

The next afternoon we went to Leamington, and had a week's joyful sight seeing—Warwick, Stratford, Kenilworth, Coventry, Guy's Cliff—some of them over and over, sometimes taking the children; and reading Shakespeare in the hours between. Then to London.

Once when my husband went up from Oxford to preach in London, he had found a very desirable boarding-place for us in Westbourne Crescent, Lancaster Gate, very near the entrance to Kensington Gardens (fine for the children); and by walking diagonally across Hyde Park, adjoining, we could reach St. James' Park and Buckingham Palace. We had two weeks before the date of the Baptist World Congress, and did the fundamental sightseeing in that time, taking the children out to Windsor, once to the Abbey, and down the river to Hampton Court and Kew Gardens. In St. Paul's, the youngest exclaimed as we stood under the high dome, "I'd certainly like to hear music in this place!" The South Kensington Museum was conveniently near, and the Natural History Museum close to it; and in Kensington Palace we all enjoyed Queen Victoria's coronation robe of Cloth of Gold, also her doll-house, and the books given her by her mother; for it was here she spent her early life. The British Museum we saw by degrees, the peak of wonder for me being always the same, the Three Fates in the Elgin Collection, brought from the Parthenon. They never failed to come alive. The Rosetta Stone, of course, was important to my husband.

Readers' tickets for the Museum library had been



promptly obtained (kindness of Mr. Shakespeare), and steady reading for the Grammar dominated the days. Mr. Lloyd George—no less—gave Dr. Robertson a ticket for the House, and he had the luck to hear a lively debate on the War Stores scandal. We heard a good many preachers—Campbell Morgan on his last Sunday before going to America, Dr. Rushbrooke, Dr. Phillips, Dr. Clifford, “that mighty man of valor,” Dr. R. J. Campbell; and in Queen’s Hall Rainy, Ross Taylor, Robertson Nicoll, and George Adam Smith. Dr. Robertson preached in Bloomsbury and Market Harbors.

Some unusual privileges were the sight of Codex A and Magna Charta (the latter now in America for safe keeping!); the Jerusalem Chamber, where my father in 1870 had been invited in by Bp. Ellicott at the lunch-hour, to meet the revision committee, Lightfoot, Alford, Westcott, Hort, etc. In the University Museum we saw Dr. Flinders Petrie’s exhibit of Egyptian discoveries. “He and Mrs. Petrie both quick, ardent and modest. Inscriptions copied from 300 monuments at Sinai. She supervised work in Egypt while he went there—opened seven tombs and copied everything for him. Model of Semitic temple in Sinai.”

We all went to Southwark to see the King and Queen go by to open the newly created Cathedral; then to the Tower, and the children were thrilled to find their feet on London Bridge. We went to the memorial service in St. Paul’s for John Hay; and a few days later to Ambassador Reid’s reception for Americans at Dorchester House.

Meantime delegates from America began to trickle in for the Congress meeting, Dr. Mullins, Dr. Eager and others

of the Faculty, Dr. Whitsitt, the Prestridges, Dr. Farmer of Toronto and countless old friends. Also the new friends made in Oxford added to our pleasure, with a feeling of being at home in England. Dr. Robertson began to be busy with committees at the Church House, tea with Dr. Clifford there and a speech at a preliminary meeting at his church. The meeting of the Baptist Union in Bloomsbury church led up to the Congress sessions. The eloquent Judge Wallis presided at a great meeting at Exeter Hall, "responses from 30 countries, with songs in many tongues."

Next morning Dr. McLaren presided and "gave a noble address, powerful as Gladstone." In the afternoon, David Lloyd George was "fiery on the Education Act, Dr. Whitsitt in good vein, and Dr. Clifford ablaze. A visit to Stockwell Orphanage. . . . Thomas Spurgeon took us into the Tabernacle." Dr. Carver and Dr. Gardner both distinguished themselves on Missionary Day, and my husband's speech next morning on Biblical Criticism "made a great hit." At the garden party at Regent's Park College to meet Dr. McLaren, "he recognized A. and said, 'I want to have a talk with you.'" Next evening he preached at Regents' Park Church. He was on the Committee that framed the constitution for the Alliance, helped about the nominations, and was called out in the discussion next day. He was put on the Executive Committee. At the great closing meeting in Albert Hall, 8000 were present; "Dr. Meyer and Dr. McLaren the best of all."

The day after the Congress adjourned, a special visit was planned to Bedford and Cambridge, with a speech on Bunyan by Dr. Clifford, and a beautiful luncheon in the

great Hall of Trinity College. "Dr. Whitley took the Prestidges and us to King's Chapel and Christ Church, where we rested and talked. On the bank behind Trinity we chatted with Dr. Gardner and Ryland Knight."

The ten days after the Congress were a mixture of social courtesies back and forth, and renewed sightseeing and little trips—the Tate Gallery, the Zoo, Canterbury, Greenwich (tea with a lady there who took us first for a four-mile walk in a stiff wind), the Wax Works, and shopping, including the buying of dolls (royal names, of course). All the time, the studying in the British Museum Library, till finally, "A. went to the British Museum and finished his Gk. work there." He preached two Sundays in August at Bloomsbury; and in the week between we went with the two older children to the Isle of Wight. As we crossed the Solent, we saw the French fleet off to the right, come on a courtesy visit, and Nelson's flag-ship, the *Victory*, riding cheerfully with them! 1905 was the Nelson year, the centennial of Trafalgar, and Nelson's death; and his message as he went into that battle was strung from the Admiralty Building across the Street, in the original code: "England expects that every man will do his duty." Tennyson's home, Farringford, was closed, much to Miss Weld's distress when we told her, but on the way back we saw Bournemouth and Salisbury, "the Cathedral beautiful as a lily."

On August 14th we left for the British Chautauqua at Aberystwyth. The Welsh scenery was "most lovely, like the best of the Valley of Virginia. Alexandra Hall is right upon the ocean, which is the chief charm of the place. The Bradfords and Miss Webb met us kindly, the people all

cordial and lively, quite like an American crowd." *Sat.* A.'s lecture tonight on educational methods in the U.S. Dr. Garvie moved a vote of thanks . . . *Sun.* Went to Welsh Baptist church (we had greatly enjoyed the Welsh singers at the Congress meeting). At three, A.'s Chautauqua sermon in the Pier Pavilion, 1200 present. Tea at 5, then before and after supper singing in the drawing-room. We left on Tuesday, not without a group of friendly faces at the station, and two huge sticks of Aberystwyth Rock (candy) for the children, from Miss Webb."

On the way to Edinburgh, we saw two cathedrals on successive days, York and Durham—not a good plan. When people asked us at home, "What place did you like the best of all?" we always said "Edinburgh." Our Scottish ancestors seemed to stir in us, and the Waverley Novels made us feel at home. At Abbotsford, the house seemed still to hold Sir Walter's presence; and we persevered through the rain in a closed carriage to Dryburgh Abbey, which my husband had not seen on his earlier trip. He went to London to preach again at Regents' Park, while I heard Dr. Kelman. The pews in Scotland have umbrella-racks at the end; and on the street the umbrellas were a moving floor. Monday I talked with an old lady who remembered the Indian Mutiny and the Cannings, and the way Lady Canning wore a shawl. Holyrood brought Mary Stuart before us. At Stirling we all had a fine day. Discovered that the Black Watch is the Robertson regiment, their tartan the Hunting Robertson. Another FINE DAY for the Trossachs, Loch Katrine and Loch Lomond, and the heather in its glory.

Then came the wonderful week-end with the Stalkers in



Aberdeen, leaving the children in Hattie's care. Mrs. Stalker ran down the walk to meet us. Frank showed us the college, the granite works, and the Art Gallery, and "generously gave me his extra jar of heather honey." (Dear boy! He fell at Gallipoli, his first battle.) Mrs. Stalker invited the faculty to meet us at dinner, and their young pastor, who was engaged—so Frank confided—to Dorothy. Pencil games after dinner, and prayers, with Mrs. Stalker at the piano, just before the guests went home. Dr. Stalker was kindness itself, and best of all, we heard him preach Sunday night. He frankly used an old preacher's outline: "Careful in nothing, prayerful in everything, thankful for anything." When we left he appeared at the train with a box of things for the children.

The day we went to Roslyn we took Charlotte on account of the Sinclair name. All gloried in Edinburgh Rock and admired the soldiers drilling before the Castle. We got a Highland bonnet for Cary, and material for a kilt suit, which I successfully pleated by the instructions of a skeptical old man who sold it to me.

We came through the Wordsworth country on the way to Liverpool. "Rain, but it STOPPED just as we climbed into the coach, and the ride to Ambleside was glorious, the rivulets rushing white down the mountainside, the air fresh and cool. A starlit night, Wordsworth's grave at Grasmere."

Next day was Nell's birthday. She asked to have her cake at Wordsworth's seat by the lake, so we all went this time and read some of the poems in the summer-house. We could all get on the great rock, the Seat; and as we produced the cake, with eight small chocolates in tinfoil in a circle like



a tiny Stonehenge (in lieu of candles), a lady going by in a coach called out, "Oh, look at those American children having a birthday cake!" After luncheon, the trip down Lake Windermere; a lovely afternoon.

And so to Liverpool, and the boat and home. We took care to come through Washington, that the children might see, in their own country, buildings as beautiful and interesting as they had been seeing in England and Scotland.

It was my first trip abroad, my husband's second. We did not see as many places as some travellers; but we *lived* over there, a normal life, and made real friendships. We read English history, we bought Mr. Hare's *Walks in London*, and some English children's books including *Singing Games*. We were stimulated and refreshed, and the Grammar was sped on its way to publication in 1914.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE "BIG GRAMMAR"

Some day a great and imaginative historian, let us hope, will write this story in full, which will read like a romance. The story is that of a people of mixed Nordic and Mediterranean bloods who came to be known as Hellenes, who inhabited the coastlands and islands of the Aegean Sea. It is a story of many phases and of vast sweep, showing:

How they carried their idea of democracy and their unrivaled culture to all parts and ports of the Eastern and Western Mediterranean; how, because of their genius for individualism, they developed their local dialects that were different yet alike, though some, like the Attic, rose superior to the rest; how, as time went on, in the history-making career of their half brother of Nordic blood, Alexander, their world language, which was a fusion of their various dialects based on the Attic, was spread over the civilized Mediterranean lands; and then——

How the Galilean's apostles passed by two of the languages of the superscription over the Cross (Latin, the official language of the Empire, and Aramaic, the mother-tongue of Palestine), even ignored the sacred language of the Psalmists, and wrote their eternal story in that same world language of the Aegean Greeks; how this spoken tongue thereby became the language of literature in the

Western world, and the old classic Greek languished except as enshrined in literature; how the knowledge of the fact that the language of the New Testament was the international spoken language of the first century of the peoples of the Mediterranean basin, faded from the mind and memory of man; how the fall of Constantinople and the consequent dissemination of the classic Greek language throughout the Western world brought on the Revival of Learning and contributed to a revival of interest in the Greek of the New Testament, and eventually to the Reformation; also——

How scholars still struggled in vain to explain the Greek of the New Testament as a queer and unsuccessful effort of the evangelists and apostles to write correct Greek; how Egyptologists brought to light ancient Greek manuscripts and papyri which had been lying more or less unnoticed in the museums; how the excavators by accident had been led to dig into ancient scrap piles and garbage heaps, and threw up pieces of broken pottery scribbled over in the Greek dialect of the first century; how even for decades it did not dawn upon the scholarly world that the New Testament Greek never claimed to be classic Greek, but was the *common* language of the first century world; how during the last half of the nineteenth century the new light of this discovery slowly dawned upon the scholars of the Continent and Great Britain; how for a period no one seems to have felt the call to gather together, correlate, and interpret this new learning to the world, in a great authoritative work; and finally——

How a young Southern scholar of the United States—not

of Oxford or Cambridge or Berlin or Harvard or Yale, but of an almost unknown theological seminary on the banks of the Ohio river, in Kentucky—dared to essay the task, and so “came to the Kingdom for such a time as this”; how he demonstrated that by nature and training he had the eminent qualities for so herculean a task—an enormous capacity for hard and sustained work, meticulous accuracy in details, an unswerving will to persevere in spite of almost overwhelming difficulties, and a consuming ambition to succeed in what to him was a holy task; how he succeeded ultimately, and wrung recognition, for a time, from an unwilling and doubting world.

What a story that will be for some historian! What a story, in fact, it was—stretching all the way from the Ilissus, the Tiber, the Rhine, the Thames, even to the Ohio, over a period of more than two millenniums. That is the sketch of the story which we shall now tell with some fullness.

The “Big Grammar” was indeed Dr. Robertson’s *magnum opus*, his masterpiece, upon which his fame will chiefly rest. It was hewn out by the labors of a quarter of a century—to be exact, twenty-six years. In his Introduction and historical portions he has told the extraordinarily interesting story of his labors and their backgrounds which we here in partial manner recapitulate.

The writing of the “Big Grammar” was finished the middle of February, 1912, and came from the presses on July 1, 1914. For twelve years previous it had been Dr. Robertson’s chief task. Dr. Broadus, twenty-six years before, had proposed that they together get out a revised edition of Winer. Thayer, the American translator of Winer, at that time was

voicing the need of a new grammar of the Greek New Testament. Professor Robertson had written one hundred pages of the proposed revision of Winer when he became convinced that it was not possible. Instead, he proposed their making a new grammar on a new plan. This decision was based on the fact of the great progress that had been made in the previous decade in comparative philology and historical grammar. The world had left Winer far behind. It was then that Dr. Broadus, because of his advanced age, relinquished his part in the work and left the colossal task to his junior colleague. That decision of Dr. Broadus marked an epoch in the life of Dr. Robertson.

Professor Smiedel was working at a similar task, but found later that he could not go through with it. As Dr. Robertson was deep in his new enterprise, Dr. James Hope Moulton of Cambridge, already eminent in the same field, announced his intention of writing a New Testament grammar. Professor Robertson, however, could not draw back now that he had begun. From that time on, as his correspondence shows, it was a friendly race between the two Greek scholars, one of Cambridge University, England, the other of the Louisville Seminary, U.S.A. It aroused general interest in the world of New Testament scholarship.

Doctor Bob, after the task was completed, admitted that it had been a titanic one, and that at times he had been tempted to give it up. He says the physical effort of writing it in long hand was a joy by the side of the toil of research. The languages he employed were Greek, French, German, and Anglo-Saxon, and, as he says, "a smattering of Assyrian, Dutch, Gothic and Italian." He had knowledge also of



Hebrew and Aramaic, though not of Syriac and Arabic, and could use Coptic and Sanscrit.

His predecessor, Dr. Broadus, under whom he had studied, was a disciple of Gessner Harrison of the University of Virginia, who was the first American scholar to use Bopp's *Vergleichende Grammatik* and to teach the historical method in the study of language. Dr. Robertson thus inherited not only the training and the task, but the method of approach of Broadus. In 1909 a distinguished German scholar of Munich had written that not a single American classical scholar had produced, on an extensive scale, a work of the slightest scientific value. This grave accusation our young Southern scholar dared to essay to refute. A professor of the University of Chicago made a sharp reply in kind to the German scholar, and boldly declared "the need of rescuing scholarship itself from the German yoke," along with "German inaccuracy" and "the disease of German scholarship." This is enough to indicate the psychological atmosphere in which our young scholar (he was only twenty-five) began his herculean labors. It also indicates that scholars who deal with the higher things of the spirit are oftentimes seen to be made of very common clay, like their lowlier brethren. So far as our grammarian was concerned, no one could charge him with lack of courage. To some of the scholarly world abroad it might have seemed pure bravado, like that of a mouse attacking an elephant.

His preface and historical chapters of the "Big Grammar" are lucid and illuminating. He speaks of the joy of the grammarian in the conviction that his work is necessary. He quotes Fairbairn in an address before the Baptist Theolog-

ical College at Glasgow: "No man can be a theologian who is not a philologist." He did not consider his "Big Grammar" as an enlargement of his "Short Grammar" (1908). The latter was for students, the former for advanced workers and scholars.

Dr. Robertson gladly and graciously recognized his indebtedness to scholars of all lands. Of the American group he particularly mentioned the wit and wisdom of Gildersleeve of the University of Virginia and Johns Hopkins, whom he designated "the censor of Greek scholarship," and quotes him as saying, "At least whole grammars have been constructed about one emptiness." Dr. Robertson gave special credit to the following scholars in the realm of New Testament Greek—Deissmann, Mayser, Milligan, Moulton, Rodermacher, Thumb, Volker, and Wilcken. He studied diligently and fruitfully in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and the British Museum. With the years, his book grew so in size that he confessed he often drew back "in terror."

In the meantime other scholars besides Moulton were working hard on books in the same general field—Deissmann, Mayser, Helbing, Thackeray, Milligan, Thumb, and Blass. By incredible diligence, good health and good fortune, after a quarter of a century his Grammar was given to the world before all the rest.

The Italian philologist, Professor Trombetti, has demonstrated that all speech is of ultimate common origin, which is a profound confirmation of the oneness of origin of mankind.

In his preface Dr. Robertson shows that the science of comparative philology had not revolutionized linguistic

study when Winer first wrote. He was, however, a pathfinder. Three great translations into English were made of Winer's work by Masson of Edinburgh, Professor Thayer of Harvard, and W. F. Moulton of Cambridge.

The full new day of New Testament study came during the last decade preceding 1914. It began with Deissmann's *Bibelstudien* in 1895 and his *Neue Bibelstudien*, 1897. The new era was on. Thumb in Germany wrote a great book on the *Koine* in 1901. He had produced in 1895 his *Handbuch der neugriechischen Volkssprache* which was put into English by S. Angus, and was immediately used by students of modern Greek.

The Moultons of Cambridge rendered the study of New Testament a great service. The father (W. F. Moulton) was, as we have seen, translator of Winer, and the son (J. H. Moulton), wrote his *Introduction to New Testament Greek*, and in 1906 gave to the world his famous *Prolegomena*, which was volume I of *A Grammar of the New Testament Greek*. It was his second volume which he was endeavoring in vain to finish before Dr. Robertson completed his work, which when done rendered the work of Moulton and all the rest unnecessary.

*The Prolegomena* demonstrated that the *Koine*, which was the language of the New Testament and the papyri, was not classic Greek, but an international Greek dialect.

The study of comparative philology had caused a revolution in the study of language. The old method was for the grammarian to make a rule and then note the "exceptions," with the result that "the exceptions" sometimes equalled in number the rule. The ancients did not have our distinctions

between “regular” and “irregular.” Comparative grammar studies and compares several languages at once. All Indo-European languages are germane and naturally throw light upon each other. Even in Roman days grammarians compared Latin and Greek words. Roman writers defined grammar as “the science of speaking and writing correctly.” In recent times the science of comparative philology and grammar has been revived and enormously improved. It is to this feature of linguistic science that the title of the “Big Grammar” . . . “*In the Light of Historical Research*” refers.

Modern comparative philology was not quite a hundred years old when the “Big Grammar” was issued. Bopp, considered as its real founder, began to write in 1816. An array of scholars of Germany, England, France, Greece and other lands took up and expanded the work.

The new science was applied to the classic Greek authors with great success, so that it is claimed that the modern editions of Greek writers are now well-nigh ideal. Dr. Robertson, following others, declared that the Greek language remains the most perfect organ of human speech. The reason given is that they were talkers, whereas we are readers.

Beside the renewed and improved science of comparative language study there was another, and new element that made the “Big Grammar” of monumental importance, which was—

### THE KOINE

New Testament writers used the international Greek dialect called *Koine* (common), a language common to all, which enabled tourists, business men and the common peo-

ple in all parts of the Roman Empire to travel, correspond, and do business with ease.

It grew up in the time of Alexander the Great (300 B.C.) and spread Greek culture throughout the Graeco-Roman world till about the time of Constantine (330 A.D.). It was a slow growth, being a mixture of various Greek dialects, based on the Attic, and has been preserved in modern Greek. Though it was the language of the common people, it was not low or vulgar in the usual sense. This was the language of the New Testament, which in turn ennobled it. Wellhausen said, "In the Gospels . . . the spoken Greek became literature."

Dr. Robertson says of the Koine that it "had all the memories of the people's life"; and Mahaffy, speaking of New Testament writers, exclaimed, "Did any men ever tell a great story with more simplicity, with more directness, with more power?"

The Koine was the Greek language popularized. "Grammar was simplified, exceptions decreased or generalized, flexions dropped or harmonized, construction of sentences made easier." The Roman Senate and imperial governors had their degrees put into Koine and promulgated. As we know, Paul wrote to Roman Christians in Greek. Emperor Marcus Aurelius wrote his "Meditations" in Greek. Dr. Robertson expressed with beauty the part played by the Koine in the world's life: "It was really an epoch in the world's history when the babel of tongues was hushed in the wonderful language of Greece." The "Big Grammar" was written in the light of this exciting and unspeakably important discovery, since all previous grammars were now obsolete.



The struggle between conservatism and modernism is age-long. Doubtless in the first century the Greek classicists scorned the Koine of the people. The New Testament writers used it and thereby gave it standing. It was put into noble and stately English by the King James translators. When in these days it is translated back into the "colloquial diction" of the people, as has been done a number of times in recent years, conservatism inveighs against it as wrong, if not downright irreverent. But these translations into the language of the home and street are in our English Koine. These later translations are more in accord with the language of the New Testament than the stately King James version.

The story of the discovery of this ancient international language gives us another illustration of the blindness and stubbornness of ultra-conservatism, which is the refusal to recognize new light. Scholars are supposed to be searchers after truth and on the look-out for new light and learning. But scholars, at times, are as blind as the ignorant.

One year before the appearance of the "Big Grammar" (1913) Professor J. Rendel Harris pointed out—what New Testament scholars had overlooked, or scorned—that Professor Masson of Edinburgh, in his first edition of *Winer* in 1859, had said: "The diction of the New Testament is the plain and unaffected Hellenic of the Apostolic Age as employed by Greek-speaking Christians when discoursing on religious subjects. . . . Apart from Hebraisms . . . the number of which has, for the most part, been grossly exaggerated—the New Testament *may be considered as exhibiting the only fac-simile of the colloquial diction em-*

*ployed by unsophisticated Grecian gentlemen of the first century who spoke without pedantry.*" (Italics ours.) Professor Masson recognized that New Testament Greek was not classic Greek, but "colloquial diction," and thereby was pointing in the direction of the new truth that was to revolutionize New Testament Greek study two generations later. But no one heeded or cared. The conservative Greek scholars of the Continent would not permit a Scottish upstart to teach *them*.

The discovery of the international language of the first century, which is the Koine, was made chiefly through a new study of the thousands of *papyri* in the libraries of Europe, Britain and America. These ancient Egyptian MSS had lain there all unnoticed until a new interest in them was aroused on the part of scholars. That the vast numbers of these MSS were preserved during the ages is due to the providential fact of the dryness of Egypt's climate.

Besides the *papyri* of the first century which demonstrated the existence of the Koine, there were vast numbers of *ostraca* (pieces of broken pottery) excavated which, in the ancient day, the poor had used for writing purposes in lieu of the expensive *papyri*. They were used for writing notes to distant loved ones, for receipts, orders and similar uses of daily life. The dump-heaps where they were found have proved to be precious mines, or quarries, for language study.

Formerly, it was thought that scholars and grammarians gave laws to language. Now it is axiomatic that usage makes linguistic laws. Language is only the instrument of men for expressing ideas, and they have the right to fashion

their instruments as they please. There is no external law for language. Grammarians are not law-makers, but historians, who record and explain how people actually say and write things, not what or how they *ought* to say them. The history of language discloses many interesting facts as to how people came to say and write as they did, showing how languages grow and change with their peoples. Hence the study of words is one of the most fruitful of all studies. If we knew the story of all the words of the world's languages we should certainly know the history of mankind.

So, we can understand somewhat the emotion and state of mind of Dr. Robertson when he used to say reverently: "I feel as truly led of the Holy Spirit when I am studying Greek roots as the preacher when he is preaching." That was not scholastic pride or scholarly bombast. It was rather the recognition of a profound truth—that the words of Scripture are truth-bearers. It is not an occasion for a smile then, when one of his devoted students relates that Dr. Robertson's voice used always to soften when he spoke of "my Large Grammar." The preparation of that "Big Grammar" had been for him a heavy and holy enterprise, a gift, a trophy, a sacrifice of toil and love which he offered up to his Lord.

"I toiled unto weariness exceeding abundantly more than they all," wrote the ancient writer in Koine. It can easily be imagined that our Grammarian, as he thought of those twenty-six years and pondered those compact Greek superlatives of Paul, would straighten up with that smile of his, a far-away look and a wave of the hand and murmur as

to an old friend: "I understand, for I too have so toiled more than they all."

It has already been noted that Dr. Robertson, as a rule, would not work at night. But he knew how to toil unremittingly by day. Former students cannot forget that picture of him through the open window, bending over his books that covered his desk and floor about him, oblivious to all else, while they played out on the campus. Only a grim Spartan sense of loyalty to his task can explain his seeming lack of sociability during working hours when students would call at his office. He would remain standing while attending to the business in hand, knowing the average man's incapacity properly to evaluate time. He knew what was in man, and was certain that an invitation to sit down meant the loss of a precious half hour. As a result of this devotion to work, a friend could speak of him as "the despair of many, because of the quantity and excellence of the work" he turned out. The writer added that he was sure that A.T.R. was "sincerely happy in the anticipation that heaven is to be a place where there is no night, so that he may work all the time."

A friend recalled that soon after the "Big Grammar" was finished, A.T.R. took him down into the vault of the old Seminary building on Broadway, and, pointing to the pile of MS, he remarked simply: "There *it* is!" They stood in silence, each in his own way, thinking of "*it*." Scholars alone can appreciate the enormousness of the task of writing a Grammar of 1360 compact pages (the later editions of 1500 pages), with the "meticulous accuracy" for which he was known even in Wake Forest student days.

For the first thirteen or more years he prepared himself in a general way for his great life's work. His labors on the *Syllabus* and especially on the "Short Grammar" led toward his *magnum opus*. The "Short Grammar," with its four translations—six editions—in itself was no small triumph. Dr. James Denny of Glasgow University had written just three years before: "What a world-success your Grammar is having! I never heard of such a career being achieved by a text-book, and congratulate you heartily. I hope the big one will soon appear." That was all very fine, but publishers of necessity do not think in terms of congratulations, but of coin.

Dr. Robertson after finishing the labor of writing, at once entered into correspondence with George H. Doran Company, publishers of his "Short Grammar." Before the month passed, on February 27, 1912, Mr. Doran wrote this very significant letter which clearly sets forth the unusual situation: "I have been having some very interesting talks . . . concerning your important work, *The Larger Grammar of the Greek New Testament*. . . . If I am judging aright, this new work, because of its having full advantage of study and research down to the present date, will supersede all previous work along the line of the Grammar of the Greek New Testament. . . . It will be revolutionary in that you recognize the colloquial Greek of the untutored Apostles and have departed entirely from the purely classical forms of all present works on the Greek New Testament. The importance of such a radical step cannot be over-stated, and such a work should be internationally published. Indeed, I am sure that it must have the heartiest cooperation of pub-



lishers and scholars on both sides of the Atlantic. With information before me I would then like to submit the entire matter to the consideration of Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton and Sir William Robertson Nicoll; for the magnitude and importance of the undertaking demands the most careful preliminary investigation." The perspicacity and grasp of the situation of the letter are self-evident. The great publisher was dimly, if not deeply, conscious that the world of New Testament scholarship was facing a new day, but he dared to do no other than play safe.

The Doran Company, however, soon struck a snag, for their London colleagues, Hodder and Stoughton, were already under contract to publish Moulton's contemplated Grammar. So Mr. Doran regretfully had to renounce the undertaking. That was a heavy set-back for our grammarian. Later, Scribner's took the matter under advisement, and Dr. Robertson shipped them the massive MS heavily insured. After mature consideration Scribner's also turned it down. A second deadly blow. Fortunately for all concerned, Mr. Doran later made some arrangement with Hodder and Stoughton whereby there would be full co-operation and he could proceed with the work of publishing.

Then two other serious obstacles arose. One was the heavy expense of setting up the type from Dr. Robertson's long-hand MS which already in places had been corrected so as to be almost illegible. Both Doran and Scribner's urged that the whole MS be typewritten and double spaced so as to save the heavy expense of unnecessary corrections. Dr. Robertson could not be convinced of the necessity of this,

though the plan would have been far more economical, as was evident later.

The other difficulty was the meeting of the expense of making the plates, along with securing funds necessary for current expenses of typesetting and corrections. Without the provision of this initial expense the excessive price of the book would have precluded the possibility of a large sale. He used up all his available personal funds, borrowed to the limit on his life-insurance policies. Still the publishers called for more. This brought on the darkest hour in the history of the "Big Grammar." He was near to bankruptcy, he thought. A beloved colleague narrates how, crushed and utterly despondent, Dr. Robertson came to him and said he wished he had never undertaken it at all. There seemed no hope of going on.

Then it was that the idea of creating a Publishing Fund from gifts of well-to-do and generous friends was suggested. An effort was inaugurated, but failed. Finally Dr. Mullins had a brilliant idea that was carried through. The plan was that the Board of Trustees of the Seminary authorize the creation of a revolving Faculty Publishing Fund. It provided that when a professor's book was published with the aid of the Fund the royalties were to be paid in till the whole loan was cancelled, and further royalties to be paid to the author. The Fund was then to be available for other books as occasion demanded.

The official campaign was organized, the money was raised, the "Big Grammar" was saved. After twenty-six years of toil and nervous strain the Grammar, so long an ideal, was finally a printed reality. It was a gala day for

the Robertson children. In *Recollections*, written by the eldest daughter, we read: "Father says that when the Big Grammar is published he will take us to the Seelbach hotel for a turkey dinner," which promise was duly fulfilled.

The success of the "Big Grammar" in the world of New Testament Greek scholarship was immediate and astounding. It was printed on June 12, 1914, and by the end of the year there were only two hundred and twenty-five copies left of the first edition. It went through four editions in nine years.

As it was going through the press, Camden M. Cobern, after reading the MS for nine hours wrote: "I never expected to see a Grammatical Introduction which would surpass Moulton's in brilliancy and comprehensiveness; but yours has. It is the biggest thing American scholarship has done."

Dr. Stalker tells of his joy at its appearance and exclaimed: "I have been turning over the leaves with astonishment, admiration and delight. . . . By this publication you have taken your place once for all in the front rank of the scholars of our age." Dan Crawford wrote from Africa that he had said to his friends of Oxford that in spite of war: "Sell your shirt and buy Robertson's Greek Grammar." Dr. B. B. Warfield of Princeton called it "a monumental Grammar." *Souter's Pocket Lexicon* in Britain referred to it as "the most comprehensive ever published." When the "Big Grammar" arrived in Germany it is said that a group of German scholars sat up through the night and far into the morning poring over it in astonished interest. It is related that an elderly and scholarly Episcopal

rector had been induced to buy a copy. He began to look over it one Sunday morning before church service. The hours flew by and when he came to himself it was 12:15. The congregation had assembled, waited, and had finally gone home.

Scholars had difficulty in finding adjectives appropriate to their appraisals. J. D. Jones of Bournemouth said of the Grammar, "it's really like a novel," while E. J. Goodspeed called it a "stately edition." Campbell Morgan reported at Northfield that Dr. Moulton said that the "Big Grammar" was "not only up to date, but it was final on the New Testament." It is difficult to judge upon which of the two, Dr. Robertson or Dr. Moulton, did that noble tribute shed the greater honor. It was the highest praise that British scholarship could give to an American scholar. Dr. Moulton and Dr. Robertson had run the friendly and brotherly race in writing Grammars, and Dr. Bob had won.

Speaking of Dr. Robertson's attainments as manifest in his New Testament expositions and his "Big Grammar," Dr. Truett is quoted as saying that if he had a billion dollars he would gladly exchange it for Dr. Robertson's knowledge of New Testament Greek.

It was reported that in Salamanca, Spain, a member of the University faculty declared that the "Big Grammar" was the one and only work of scholarship that the United States ever produced.

The publishers, asking pardon "for a certain pride in their share in [the] great achievement" of printing the *Large Grammar*, calls attention to this interesting fact in connection with its going into its fourth edition in nine

years: "Nothing comparable to this notable record has, we believe, occurred since Erasmus first printed his Greek New Testament, 1514, precisely four hundred years before the appearance of Prof. Robertson's large Grammar."



## CHAPTER VIII

### DOCTOR BOB'S SAYINGS

Dr. Robertson had a way all his own of doing and saying things. That does not mean that his manner was freakish, though he was in certain respects set apart in a class by himself. He was continually saying quotable things and doing what was rememberable. His former students, thousands of them, are still quoting him. A precious document has preserved a goodly number of his quaint sayings, but not all, naturally, because he was incapable of saying things in an ordinary way. Mr. W. E. Davidson, one of his students, took down in shorthand his lectures on New Testament Interpretation in the year 1914-15 and mimeographed them. A second edition came out in 1916, from which we have the following characteristic sayings:

#### INSPIRATION

"The greatest proof that the Bible is inspired is that it has stood so much bad preaching."

#### TRUTH-TELLING

"Tell the truth even if you are a Baptist preacher."

#### NEW AND OLD TRUTH

"Remember things are not true just because they are old";  
and,

"Just because a thing is new is no reason that it is not true."

#### INCARNATION

Speaking of Jesus of Nazareth: "Here is the world's one opportunity to understand God."

#### THE MAN AND THE PREACHER

"It takes a good deal of a man to make much of a preacher."

#### DISCOURAGEMENT

"Don't decide great questions when you are in the dumps."

#### LOGIC

"Many people say 'therefore' when nothing has gone before. Paul doesn't do that."

#### STATIC INTELLIGENCE

"I have noticed through the years that a man simply doesn't have any more sense than he has."

#### KNOW THYSELF

"It's a hard thing to do—to look in a glass and know what kind of preacher one is looking at."

#### NOTHING TO PREACH ABOUT

"God pity the poor preacher who has to *hunt* for something to preach—and the people that have to listen."

## GROWTH

"When you stop growing you are dead."

## PROOF OF YOUR MINISTRY

"If God wants you to preach he will find somebody—who will stand it."

## IMMUNE TEXTS

He quotes Broadus: "If some sermons had small-pox the text would never catch it."

## THE POWER OF THE FEEBLE

Sending out the Seventy among enemies was as "the tremendous vigor of lambs charging wolves."

## FOOD AND SALVATION

"Speaking of Jesus and Mary of Bethany: "Better one dish and that [salvation] than all the pies and custards without it."

## DISAPPOINTED HOPES

"There are so many young Spurgeons, but so few of them grow up."

## SYMPATHY

He speaks of Paul's expression regarding "the groaning of creation" as "the sympathy of the universe."

## COURAGEOUS TIMIDITY

"Don't think that timid people are always cowards."

## MOST BEAUTIFUL STORY

He speaks of the narrative of the two going to Emmaus as "the most beautiful story I ever read. . . ."

## HOW TO MAKE BAPTISTS

"Give a man an open Bible, an open mind, a conscience in good working order, and he will have a hard time to keep from being a Baptist."

## EVOLUTION

Speaking of evolution: "I am willing to believe in it, I rather do, but not in atheistic evolution. . . . I say, write 'God' at the top, and what if he did use evolution? I can stand it if the monkeys can. . . . If he did do it that way, He still did it."

## THEOLOGY

"We won't need any theology in heaven; but we need it here for home consumption."

## SUCCESS

Speaking of Matthias, Judas' successor, never being referred to in the New Testament after his selection: "You cannot judge success by what books preserve."

## YOUNG PAUL OF TARSUS

He refers to Saul at the "ecclesiastical lynching" of Stephen as "a nice dandy young theologue that had just gotten his Th.D., holding their clothes while the rest did their dirty work."

## CONSCIENCE

"The most dangerous man is the man that gets his conscience and judgment mixed."

## MINISTERIAL JEALOUSY

"When you are driving a team do you enjoy somebody else taking the lines? Do you thank the Lord when a brother preacher does a greater work than you?"

## PAUL THE MISSIONARY

Speaking of the preacher and Paul's missionary methods and spirit: "He is not rash. . . . He does not rush where angels fear to tread, not jump every time a grasshopper pops out of the grass. He does not resign every time he is asked. He knew when to stand and when to run."

## JERUSALEM CONFERENCE

Commending the wise technique of the managers of the Jerusalem Conference he said, "What we want is gumption in religion."

## WORDS

Discussing the change in the meaning of words: "Words have a way of running down at the heel."

## GOOD LISTENERS

He quotes Zeno, the Greek philosopher, who argued from our having *two* ears and *one* mouth—that we should be good listeners, and adds that for most of us "the most brilliant conversationalist is the man who will listen to us."



## COOPERATION

He quotes from two of Dr. Broadus' grandsons on getting along with people: "The two little boys were riding a stick horse, and one said, 'If one of us would get off, I could ride better.'"

## MINISTERIAL SUPPLY

"The greatest thing you may ever do is to find somebody that can preach."

## THE PREACHER AND HIS FIELD

"It is not one-millionth time as important *where* you begin, as *what* you do after you get there."

## A MODEL CHURCH

"Make a model church and you will not have to tell about it. The sound will go forth. . . . Do not say to them [the members], 'We are a model.' Be it, and do not strut about it."

## DILIGENT BIBLE STUDENTS

He recalled the last appeal of Dr. Broadus to his students in a lecture on Apollos, when he said solemnly three times, with possibly a premonition, "*be mighty in the Scriptures.*"

## DIFFICULT CHURCHES

Discussing the divisions in the Corinthian church: "You might as well be pastor of a hornet's nest as of some churches"; and "The church at Corinth seemed to have a powerful good luck in getting things mixed and wrong. . . ."

## PASTORAL DIFFICULTIES

"It is a mighty poor pastor that can't have trouble."

## SCOLDING PREACHERS

"Some have entirely too much joy in the way they scold the folks."

## ANGER

"If you are mad, write a bitter letter, burn it up, take a walk, and very likely you will be over it. I have tried it, and it works. It is better than preaching a sermon."

## THE DANGER OF THE GOSPEL

Interpreting the Scripture passage, "A savor of life unto life or of death unto death," he said, "Preaching . . . is the most dangerous thing in the world."

## MOON-SHINING

Commenting on our being *reflecting* lights of Christ, our Sun, he told of the Irishman who, misinterpreting the facts of nature, said "He did not like the moon because it shined only on bright nights when it was not needed."

## DEVOTION TO A HOLY CAUSE

He tells of the grave fear of Dr. Boyce and Broadus at a certain grave crisis that the Seminary might die. Whereupon Dr. Broadus said: "Let us die first!"

## INACCURATE QUOTATION

He cited the little boy who quoted the Catechism as saying "the chief end of man is to glorify God and annoy him forever."

## RANTING IN THE PULPIT

"An exuberance of passion in preaching is not always proof of piety or zeal. It may indicate he has run out of stuff." It may have been this kind of preaching to which one of Dr. Robertson's small sons referred when he said: "It's easier to preach than it is to talk, because when you talk you have to say something."

## ANCESTRY

Speaking of Timothy's ancestry, he said: "The blessing of pious ancestry is not to be despised. A man can be stuck up about it. I have heard . . . evangelists boast about not having pious ancestry. . . . If God saved you in spite of unpious ancestry, thank Him, and don't run them down. Dr. Whitsitt said he had been a Baptist for two hundred and fifteen years."

## LIVE COALS

"Stirring up the gift," he said, means "make the coal of fire live again. . . . But God is not going to do the blowing. He will not furnish the fire and wind both. *You* make it blaze. . . . I have been teaching here now for twenty-seven years. Some have made good; some have made more than good, they exploded. Some had the spark; they kept it too. You will be surprised that some who knew so little did so much with their little spark, and that some with so much spark did so little. Some of you blazers will preach almost as well twenty-five years from now, and some will set the woods afire."

## GOD'S USE OF PREACHERS

"Are there some preachers whom God can't use? There are some God has a hard time using."

## SANCTIFICATION

"Sanctified" as meaning *cleansed*: "I'd rather have a clean gourd and fresh water than a gold cup with fly-specks."

## THE APOSTLE PAUL

"There can be no last word about Paul. One of the greatest joys of heaven will be not simply to see Jesus, but also to see Paul."

## HUSBANDS

Interpreting "husbands honor your wives . . . according to knowledge (gumption), to the end that your prayers be not hindered," he said, looking down at his married students, "The Lord won't hear your prayers if you don't treat your wives right. Don't look at me, Brother! It's a dangerous thing to get married if you still mean to pray."

## REVELATION

"[God] spake in different ways . . . to man; *once to a donkey*."

## DIOTREPHES

"[He] was the church boss. I wrote this man up when I first came to the Seminary. The editor next week said: 'I have gotten twenty-five letters saying, Don't send me

that paper any more. I won't have any such personal articles coming to me.' One deacon I know of boasted that he wore the scalp of every preacher that had come to their town."

#### PUBLIC READING OF THE SCRIPTURES

"I think I can tell you why people don't pay much attention to your reading. It is because you don't pay much attention yourself. . . . The first thing to do is to understand it yourself, and then read it as though you did."

#### THE TEXT AND THE SERMON

"My beloved brethren, if you never see anything else, see that there is some connection between your sermon and your text."

#### THE MILLENNIUM

Speaking of the various possibilities of interpretation, he said: "I don't know. But I have been able to throw doubt on dogmatism." Again: "Why make what we do not know hinge around something that we do know?"

#### THE JOYS OF HEAVEN

"Our cups will be full, but we must make our cups down here."

#### THE UNPREPARED STUDENT

After a poor recitation one day, Dr. Robertson said: "Well, excuse me, brother, but all I can do for you is pray for you and flunk you."



## ROBERTSONIAN CHIROGRAPHY

One of the Seminary stenographers asked him to read certain words from his MS that she couldn't decipher. He said: "Anyone should be able to read my writing. Just remember I make my N's, R's and S's just alike."

## GENTILITY

"A minister ought to be a gentleman even though he is a minister."

## EXPOSITION

"Never get out of a text what was never in it."

## NOT SURE

"The most vehement opponent is the man who is afraid he is wrong."

## THE SIDES OF A QUESTION

He quoted Broadus: "There are three sides to every question: your side, my side and the right side."

## DOUBT

He told his class of a deacon who asked his wife if his collar were clean enough to wear, who immediately responded: "If it's doubtful, it's dirty."

## HARD FIELDS

"Young man, if you go to a hard field, stay by it. For, while you may not help the field, it will help you."

## HIS FAVORITE PRAYER

"Lord, take us as we are, and make us what we ought to be." This was quoted by Dr. Broadus from the prayer of a country deacon, and became one of Dr. Robertson's favorite petitions.

## THE BIBLE

He frequently repeated the injunction: "Let the Bible mean what it says and say what it means."

## COMMENTARY

"The Bible is the best commentary on the Bible."

## IGNORANCE

"It is astonishing how much ignorance some people can accumulate in a life time." This may be illustrated by the following incident told by one of his former students. On one occasion in class a poorly prepared student was asked the date of the birth of Christ. He replied, "December the twenty-fifth." With a look of disappointment, if not of disgust, Dr. Bob almost thundered, "Where'd you read that?" The frightened student stammered, "In the almanac." Whereupon the astounded professor demanded, "*Brother, do you preach out of the almanac?*" The poor victim was destined for many days to be asked concerning the almanac's views on the various problems of the New Testament and theology.

## THE INEXHAUSTIBLE GOSPEL

"I have never looked into the Greek New Testament five minutes without finding something I never saw before."

## CHAPTER IX

### JUBILEES

In the dear old home church of our fathers and mothers  
we used to sing,

“The Year of Jubilee is come,  
Return ye ransomed sinners home.”

The lilt of the tune and the pull of the words made us wish to catch step with the Bible saints of old as they marched to Jerusalem to celebrate the Jubilee, whatever a jubilee was.

From time immemorial jubilees and celebrations have made their appeal to mankind. Through the ages men have gathered together to memorialize heroes and their deeds, great events and periods. The emotional element of such occasions is of value when worthy things are celebrated. They are valuable to history, also, by fixing in memory men and their deeds that are worth remembering. Besides, they give a worthy satisfaction to those who celebrate, and, if living, to those who are celebrated. All this is very human and natural. What child is not filled with excited and commendable joy over his own birthday party, even though “party” for him may mean ice-cream? “Children of a larger growth” are likewise pleased over things said and done on

their own anniversaries, even though at times they may resemble a rehearsal of anticipated funeral eulogies.

Dr. Robertson was fortunate in living to see two jubilees—one at the end of each of the last two decades of his life. The first, his sixtieth anniversary, was arranged by his publisher, Mr. George Doran. The human and personal side of the publishing business may be seen in a letter from Mr. Doran to Dr. Robertson in connection with the Jubilee: "I wish I could put into this sort of letter the feeling of affection and loyalty I have for you, and how very proud I am that we are privileged to publish for you." Dr. Robertson's devoted and beloved friend of many years, Dr. S. Angus of Scotland and Australia, edited the Jubilee Circular. The Jubilee was arranged so as to include the celebration of Dr. John R. Sampey's thirty-sixth year as professor of the Seminary. This was appropriate because of a fact not generally known.

When Dr. John A. Broadus was faced with the responsibility of selecting his associate in the chair of New Testament Greek, he had two young men from whom to choose, Dr. John R. Sampey, Assistant Professor of Hebrew, Greek and Homiletics, and Dr. Robertson who had been majoring in Greek. Because of the principle of seniority Dr. Broadus left the choice to the older of the two young professors. Dr. Sampey with rare good judgment and Christian spirit replied that since he knew more Hebrew than Robertson, having taught the latter all he knew of that language, and since Robertson knew more Greek than he did, it was clear that Dr. Broadus' Associate in the Department of Greek should be young Robertson.

It was so decided, and that fixed the careers of both the junior professors for the rest of their lives. From that day forward the two young professors were intimate and devoted colleagues.

When the presidency of the Seminary became vacant upon the death of Dr. Mullins, this same rare Christian spirit of "in honor preferring one another" was manifested, this time by Dr. Robertson. So it was he who in the first faculty meeting, after the death of Dr. Mullins, made the motion that Dr. Sampey be Chairman of the Faculty, pending the election of a permanent head of the Seminary. Mr. Joshua Levering, being present in Louisville upon the occasion of the funeral of Dr. Mullins, called the executive committee together and Dr. Sampey was asked to be acting President until the regular meeting of the Board during the coming sessions of the Southern Baptist Convention, at which time Dr. Sampey was made full President.

In the making of the plans for the Jubilee it was beautiful to see the joy of Dr. Angus in his task of honoring Dr. Robertson. These two eminent scholars, both of Scottish descent, were bound together by particularly close ties of friendship and scholarship. Dr. Angus had come to Louisville, years before, from his far-flung labors, ranging from Edinburgh to Sydney, to spend a month helping to put in final form the "Big Grammar." He had followed the career of Dr. Bob almost from the first. They had kept in touch with each other through the years. In a letter of that period, Dr. Angus remarks: "A visit to your home is always a pure delight." He spoke of the "colossal success of the Jubilee tribute" which he was editing, adding that the Circular was



"an array of greetings such as has not been equalled in your country or elsewhere." Besides being editor of the Circular he felt that it was "a *real honor* to be invited to be your speaker" upon the occasion of the celebration in Louisville. When writing to Doctor Bob concerning the multiplicity of the books that were celebrated at the Jubilee, Dr. Angus had applied to him the title, which Cicero and Augustine gave to Varro, of *polugraphotatos*—"the superlatively abundant writer." He referred to the Jubilee as "a holy occasion for you and for me." Dr. Angus thought that Mrs. Robertson also should have a large part in the Jubilee celebration, saying that "the remembrance of her gracious personality is very vivid."<sup>1</sup>

The formal Jubilee was celebrated on November 10, 1923, in Norton Hall Chapel of the Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. There was not sufficient seating space for the multitudes that came to felicitate the two great scholars. A student representing the student body, and Dr. Mullins the faculty, expressed the good wishes and joy of those whom they represented. Dr. Ira M. Price of Chicago University spoke for the field of Hebrew and American friends, while Dr. Angus spoke for other lands and the world of New Testament Greek scholarship. Messages of goodwill poured in from multitudes. Later a complimentary dinner was tendered at Brown Hotel in Louisville, attended by a large number of friends from the city and state.

The Jubilee Circular comprised the salutations of fifteen

<sup>1</sup> Books by Ella Broadus Robertson: *The Child's Bible*, 1911; *Ministry of Women*, 1922; *Worship in the Home*, 1922; *The Fine Art of Motherhood*, 1930; *Half a Century* (Book of Poems), 1938; *These Things Remain*, 1941; *Along the Highway of Prayer*, 1941.

distinguished foreign and five American scholars, in Latin and Greek, German and French, and Italian and English languages.

### JUBILEE SALUTATIONS

#### *Continental*

*Prof. Adolf Deissmann*, D.Theol., D.D., University of Berlin (in German): "The New Testament Greek Grammar of Prof. A. T. Robertson is, although a *mega biblion*, a *mega agathon* (that is, "although it is a big book, [it is] a big good)." Created with a blessed diligence, trustworthy in details, and dependable in the greater matters, it will for many years to come remain a store-house of learning. I wish for my worthy colleague a rich and blessed eventide of life."

Dr. Deissmann, referring to the bigness of the Grammar (4th ed. 1500 pp.), makes a humorous allusion to an ancient proverb of Alexandria. In that home of libraries and Greek culture scholars delighted in writing ponderous volumes (scrolls), oftentimes on subjects none too interesting. These volumes were heavy both to carry around and to read. The witty Alexandrines thereupon coined the saying, "A big book (is) a big bore (evil)." The learned German colleague said that Robertson's Grammar, unlike the Alexandrine ones, though *big* was *good*.

*Prof. Edwin Mayser*, Papyri specialist of Germany (in Greek): "From beyond the sea, with all my heart, I greet the most praiseworthy Master, A. T. Robertson, the very renowned interpreter of the New Testament, because of the fact that he has so wonderfully contributed to our

knowledge of the Greek language, not only the post-classical, but that of all periods, with highest appreciation, and praying for him all good things on his sixtieth birthday and thereafter forever. With the very highest regards. . . ."

*Prof. F. W. Grosheide*, Theol. dr., litt.hum.doct. Prof. of N. T. Exegesis, Free University, Amsterdam, Netherlands (in English): "It is Prof. A. T. Robertson who has proved in our time the truth of the old adage of *Melanchthon*: "(in Latin) *Every good theologian and faithful interpreter of the heavenly doctrine must needs be first a grammarian, then a dialectician and finally a witness.*"

*Dr. Edouard Montet*, Professor de langues orientales, a l'Université de Geneve, Ancien Recteur (in French): "Sends to Prof. A. T. Robertson, his dear Colleague, the expression of his most sincere felicitations and his best wishes on the occasion of his sixtieth anniversary and of the thirty-fifth year of his professorship."

*Professor Giovanni Luzzi*, Florence, Italy (in Italian): "To Prof. A. T. Robertson, able exegete, exquisite expositor of the Sacred Books, sure guide in the fruitful field of the Greek New Testament, on this festal occasion, there goes a reverent salutation which is a warm good wish and expression of lively appreciation from Italy which he loves and admires."

## BRITISH NATIONS

### *England*

*Sir W. Robertson Nicoll*, C.H., LL.D., Editor *British Weekly*: "I consider it a great honor to be asked to join in the just recognition of Prof. A. T. Robertson. It is long

since I began to read everything that had his name attached to it. His wonderful Grammar of the New Testament is a work which entitles him to a place in the very front rank of those who teach and study the New Testament. Prof. Robertson has behind everything he writes a vast and accurate scholarship. He is the most unpretending of men, but his merits cannot be hid."

*Rev. Walter Lock*, D.D., Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity, University of Oxford: "I had the advantage of making the acquaintance of Prof. Robertson in Oxford and saw what a keen and thorough student he is: and I knew that he combines the two qualities so important for a scholar of the New Testament, careful scholarship and loyal reverence. I am sure that my eminent predecessor, Dr. Sanday, would, if he were still alive, join with me in greeting to Professor Robertson and in every good wish to him."

*Rev. Principal A. E. Garvie*, M.A. (Oxon.), D.D.(Glas.), New College, London: "It is given to few men to spend so many years of labour in one field of Christian scholarship and to reap from it so abundant a harvest as Dr. Robertson has done, and to still fewer to be so fit as to hold out the promise of more fruitful years. I join most gladly in sincere appreciation of his distinguished services to N.T. learning."

*John Clifford*, D.D., Pastor Emeritus, Westbourne Park Church, London, England: "It is a joy to congratulate Dr. A. T. Robertson on his jubilee. He is one of the foremost scholars of our time. His mastery of the Greek of the New Testament is unique and his contribution to the exposition of the contents of the New Testament has laid the world under obligation to his pen. His services to the ministry

will be reproductive for many years to come and the influence of his fine loyalty to Christ and devotion to his Church and Kingdom will go on moulding and shaping the future of religion in the Southern States for generations. May Dr. Robertson be long spared to us to complete and crown the work so nobly begun and carried forward."

*Prof. George Milligan, D.D., D.C.L., Glasgow University, Moderator of the Church of Scotland:* "Dr. Robertson has good reason to be proud of his achievement—an epoch-making Grammar on the most approved lines of modern historical research. He has suggested new and fruitful lines of investigation. He has provided advanced students, teachers, and scholarly pastors with an invaluable aid in their efforts to acquaint themselves more thoroughly with their Greek NT."

*Alex. Souter, D.Litt., Professor of Humanity, Aberdeen University:* "Prof. A. T. Robertson is a man with a remarkable combination of gifts. In his comprehensive Grammar he has raised a stately edifice which will last for generations and insures him a permanent reputation. But he has at the same time by his homiletical works, informed alike by sound learning and spiritual insight, rendered a unique service. Profound learning has not dried up the springs of his spirit."

*Prof. James Stalker, D.D., United Free College, Aberdeen:* "As an old friend of Dr. Robertson I am glad to hear of the movement to honour him. Like certain theologians of the past, such as Calvin and Luther, he was happy in becoming early possessed with the purpose of a great work, which has drawn into itself his studies of every kind. Not



only has he completed the *Magnum Opus*, but his studies have widened out on every hand. With scholarship he has combined loyalty to the Gospel, and few are the names in Christendom today which add such weight to the profession of evangelical traditions. Only those however who have seen him in his own home can be fully aware how tender is the heart of the great scholar."

*Rev. Harry Ranston*, M.A., Litt.D., Methodist Theological College, Auckland, N. Z.: "Dr. A. T. Robertson's Grammars are amongst my closest companions. For all matters relating to the Greek N.T. there is absolutely no other book to compare with the larger work. Students owe a special debt of gratitude to its author."

*S. Angus*, Ph.D., D.Litt., Professor of N.T. and Historical Theology, St. Andrew's College, Sydney, Australia: "With cordial appreciation of Dr. Robertson's indefatigable activity as a teacher of the N.T., his eminent services to his own Church and to international Biblical scholarship, and with grateful remembrance of thirteen years' inspiring friendship. May many fruitful years be added."

*Prof. J. H. Farmer*, B.A., LL.D., Dean in Theology, McMaster University, Toronto, Canada: "It has been my privilege to know Dr. Robertson since he was Assistant to Dr. John A. Broadus. Prof. Robertson has worthily maintained the Broadus tradition. His monumental *Grammar* would seem to be sufficient output for one short life. That alone entitles him to a foremost place in the ranks of N.T. scholars. In several respects it represents distinct advances over all previous works and is not likely soon to be superseded. If I may I should like to add my conviction that an

important factor in making possible this great career has been the gracious and inspiring influence of his charming and brilliant wife."

#### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

*Melanchthon W. Jacobs*, D.D., Hosmer Professor of N.T. Criticism and Exegesis, Hartford Theological Seminary: "Dr. Robertson's contribution to the grammatical understanding of the New Testament is noteworthy, not merely because of the monumental work in which he has laid it before N.T. scholars, but rather because of the magnificent way in which, on the background of Classical Greek, he has made N.T. Greek stand out as a vital part of the living Greek of its day."

*Prof. Benj. W. Bacon*, D.Litt., LL.D., Yale University: "Students of the Greek N.T. everywhere are debtors of Prof. Robertson. His patient labor in the compilation of philological material, in his larger *Grammar of the N.T. Greek*, is his most enduring monument."

*Edgar J. Goodspeed*, Ph.D., D.D., Professor of Biblical and Patristic Greek, University of Chicago: "Prof. Robertson has placed all serious students of the N.T. in Greek under lasting obligations by assembling and organizing the results of modern philological study and archeological materials in a N.T. Grammar, which for its comprehensive scope and modern point of view may fairly be called unrivalled."

*D. A. Hayes*, Ph.D., LL.D., Prof. of N.T. Interpretation, Garrett Biblical Institute, Chicago: "It has been my great pleasure to know Prof. Robertson personally. I recall the real delight with which I went through his *Grammar*. Bib-

lical students are grateful for his genial personality, his persevering scholarship. He is to be congratulated on his ministry to the unlearned and the learned."

*President E. Y. Mullins*, President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary: "Prof. Robertson is a man of marvelous capacity for hard work, and a genius in the realm of N.T. Greek. His great Grammar cost him twenty-five years of the hardest kind of labor. Nothing but indomitable energy and consecration to the task inspired by the great vision could have led to this result."

*W. Hersey Davis*, M.A., Th.M., Th.D., Associate Professor of New Testament Interpretation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary: "As Dr. Robertson's assistant I joyfully accept the opportunity to record my appreciation of and gratitude to him, my teacher, the incomparable master of the Greek New Testament, peerless teacher of the English New Testament and inimitable and popular lecturer at Bible conferences. The value of his labors to the scholarship of the world is inestimable."

### THE SECOND JUBILEE

On November 6, 1933, his seventieth birthday, Dr. Robertson's students, past and present, presented him with a memorial volume of appreciation. Representatives of the classes of each year, from 1889 to 1933, expressed the love and good wishes of his "boys" throughout the long years. Fifty-five letters, including one from the faculty, were bound in a volume and constitute an interesting and valuable historic document of the life of the Seminary. It deeply stirred and cheered the heart of the great teacher. Of these letters

we have selected one which expresses in humorous vein the love, devotion, and pride of those who had studied under him.

*CONGRATULATIONS, DR. BOB!*

There is a professor of Greek,  
Unrivalled, unwearied, unique,  
Who at three-score and ten  
Keeps pushing his pen  
And producing a volume a week.

One would think that at seventy years  
Greek would weary the wisest of seers;  
But the older he grows  
The more grammar he knows  
And more eager for study appears.

I couldn't have gotten that way  
Though tempted by fabulous pay;  
But this Louisville sage  
Scribbles page after page,  
Not for coin, but for love of KOINE!

—E. McNEILL POTEAT, JR.

## CHAPTER X

### FOREIGN SCHOLAR-FRIENDS

Few American Biblical scholars, perhaps, of his day had more intimate fellowship and correspondence with the foremost scholars of Great Britain and the Continent than Dr. Robertson. His files contain letters from scholars, whose names belong to history, which will become priceless in the coming years. Not all were specialists in New Testament Greek. Geographers, archeologists, excavators, historians, famous pastors, mystics, commentators, and Bible expositors corresponded with him on terms of cordial intimacy. In glancing over these letters we see our Doctor Bob in a new light of his many-sided life, as he and his friends chat together with their pens. They speak of things of varied and general interest and for the moment we forget Greek grammars and New Testament exposition.

We introduce here a few of his more interesting friends, some of whom while on some American pilgrimage were welcomed into the hospitable home of Dr. and Mrs. Robertson, an experience the Britishers cherished in their memories.

*Sir W. Robertson Nicoll*, editor of the *British Weekly*, came to know Dr. Robertson through the latter's editorial relation to the *Baptist Argus*. He seemed to keep in touch with the *Argus* and to recognize when Doctor Bob was and



was not writing. In his correspondence, Sir Robertson called attention to a fact in American literature which seems to have been overlooked by a goodly number of American literati. He was considered by some to have been the highest authority on the English classics, and at the same time he had broad and accurate knowledge of American literature which he evidenced by an editorial in the *Weekly* in 1909. He referred to the atrocities of the Confederates during the War between the States. He related that in a certain state "the Rebels" took the scalps of their victims for trophies, made ornaments for their women of the bones of the unburied Federal dead.

This was too much to be borne by a loyal Southern scholar who was not too busy with Greek roots to write a "friendly and courteous" protest to Sir William. The reply, dated August 4, 1909, expressed great astonishment that every educated American did not know of the above accusations, saying that what he had written was taken from James Russell Lowell's *Political Essays*, which were first published in 1865 in the *North American Review*, and "deliberately reprinted . . . first in a volume published in Boston and then in the *Riverside* edition of his works." He was "greatly astonished" that no one, as far as he knew, had ever refuted the accusation. When Dr. Robertson did so, Sir William wrote: "Surely I ought not to be blamed for quoting from J. R. Lowell." Lowell, though admitting that the charges seemed "incredible," had offered no proof and cited no authority.

In this correspondence with the great British editor, Dr. Robertson not only rendered a great service to the cause

of accurate and truthful history, but at the same time indicated alertness of mind and courage regarding matters lying outside the circle of his immediate activities. Anything that concerned mankind was of interest to him.

*Sir William Mitchell Ramsay* did more for Christian archeology and the historico-geographical back-grounds of Asia Minor and the Book of Acts than any scholar of the last generation. A letter dated March 23, 1923, reveals the breadth of mind and sincerity of purpose of a great Presbyterian excavator and scholar who was not influenced by religious bias. He wrote at length of a rock-hewn pool and dome cut out of the rock at Burghead on the South shore of Moray Firth, Scotland. He was convinced that it was "a baptismal font" for the administration of immersion, dating from the earliest Christian times. He cites a similar one at Villeneuve des Avignons on the right bank of the Rhone in France, and says: "The analogy of the two leaves no doubt this font or pool is a *baptisterion* both at Burghead and at Villeneuve . . . and the two examples go back to quite an early period in the history of Christianity." He cites also a similar font at Timgad, the ancient Thumugadi, in the South of Numidia.

He relates these *baptisteria* to early Christianity that came into North-West Europe either via the River Elbe or through Gaul from Asia Minor. He says: "Already in the first century a pre-Roman form of Christianity and Christian custom reached the North-east of Scotland." He says with animation, speaking of these *baptisteria* and these suggested gospel trails: "I know I have in my old age opened a new page of history." He was convinced that Crescens (2 Tim.

4:10) went to *Gallia* (Gaul), and not to *Galatia*, which indicates that Christian missionaries (or at least one) were preaching the gospel in the territory of present-day France in Paul's day.

Sir William asked Dr. Robertson for references to books relating to these matters, which request Doctor Bob immediately fulfilled. Sir William further states that one of the purposes of his long letter was "to express the wish that the Southern Baptists would send a young man to travel with . . . him this summer (1923) and hunt for *baptisteria* of the Oriental Church." Doctor Robertson did what he could concerning this remarkable request, but nothing came of it; and so was lost an unusual opportunity for the cause of Christian archeology, and for Southern Baptists to make a contribution to New Testament learning.

The Robertsons became acquainted with *Dr. A. H. Sayce* of Queen's College, Oxford, the famous excavator of Egypt, in 1905. There followed an intermittent correspondence through the years till 1924. In 1908 he wrote somewhat sadly, just after leaving Egypt: "But I am homeless in Egypt now, for I have just sold my *dahabia*. . . . It was a great wrench, parting from my home of nearly twenty years where so happy a part of my life has been spent. But all things come to an end in this world, and I am becoming too old for *dahabia* life and for managing a yacht three thousand miles away." After speaking of the closing of another phase of his work in Egypt he concludes: "For sensational finds we must now look to Asia Minor and the excavations at Boghaz Keni (the ancient capital of the Hittites)." Two years later, in a letter dated Atbara, Sudan,

January 10, 1910, he wrote: "I am arrived here from a government expedition of archeological exploration . . . and go on Wednesday next to join Professor Garstang [famous Egyptologist] in his excavations at Meroe. . . . The expedition has been somewhat fatiguing—life with camels and tents always is so—but we have made discoveries, and are all well. . . . I have no Oxford news to give."

And so the Greek professor on the banks of the Ohio and the famous Egyptologist on the Nile wrote familiarly of their distinguished labors. During the tragic days of war (1916), while on a too brief visit to America he wrote: "You must be indeed gratified by the way in which New Testament scholars have received your book [The Big Grammar]; it is pleasant to feel that one has been of use to the world, and that the world appreciates it. Let me congratulate you on the completion of your great work."

He then gives a glimpse of England at war. He wrote: "You would not recognize Oxford: undergraduates, junior fellows and College servants all gone, the schools a military Hospital and the leading Colleges turned into military depots. I have lost some of my best friends during the past year." So, the learned and the great are bound together by human ties and sufferings like all the rest. In 1920 he wrote: "Europe is in much the same condition as it was after the fall of the Roman Empire, and the days of our old comfortable life are over. History repeats itself." In his last letter of 1924 he says in reply to Dr. Robertson's appreciation of his latest book, "I wish I had been qualified to add my tribute to that of the many admirers of your own work."



*Dr. James Denney*, Scottish Presbyterian New Testament Greek scholar of Glasgow University and later Principal of the United Free Church College, was one of the first group of Doctor Bob's firm friends among noted British scholars.

In 1909 he writes congratulating A.T.R. on his *Small Grammar*: "I wonder at the mass of details which you have contrived to pack within such narrow limits, and the vivacity with which you can enliven what to many are rather dreary subjects." He then chats concerning fellow-scholars: "You will be sorry to hear that Dr. (Marcus) Dods is very ill. . . . Of Dr. Fairbairn I have not heard for a while. He retires at Easter, and the principalship at Mansfield has been offered to Mr. Selbie, the Congregationalist minister at Cambridge." In 1914, just after the appearance of the "Big Grammar," he wrote: "I must congratulate you on the achievement of a stupendous task. I do not know how you have commanded the time and strength for it."

In the former days under Broadus, the N. T. classes studied *Stalker's Life of Paul* with great joy and profit. It turned out that Dr. Broadus' son-in-law with his wife became beloved and intimate friends of the Stalkers of Aberdeen, and were guests in each other's homes during the years. This friendship extended over more than twenty years, and during the entire period not a year passed without an exchange of letters.

In a letter of 1908, writing of Dr. Robertson's *Epochs in the Life of Jesus*, Dr. Stalker says: "I hail this labor of your hands with enthusiasm," adding, "this is, in my opinion,



by far your best book yet." At the close, speaking of the beloved Dr. Alexander McLaren, whom he greatly admired and loved as an expositor and preacher, he suddenly put this arresting question: "Can you tell me how it is that you Baptists have such power of producing great preachers, or why you have so little success, in the course of the centuries, in producing great hymn-writers?" No one, it seems, has ever given an answer in print to this intriguing query. In the same letter, referring with high admiration to Mrs. Robertson's *The Linguist*,<sup>1</sup> he says: "It will surely find a place in future anthologies of Children's Poetry." He says also of A.T.R.'s writings: "Your literary fertility is astounding. But I do not say that you are publishing too fast; for behind the writing there is plenty of reading and thinking." He then quotes from the *Theologische Literatur Zeitung* in which the aged German scholar Zahn spoke of Dr. Robertson's "range and accuracy of . . . knowledge of German literature." In a later letter Dr. Stalker wrote: "In spite of my admiration for *Epochs in the Life of Christ*, I think I like *Epochs in the Life of Paul* even better." He mentions A.T.R.'s affection and loyalty towards the Great Apostle, "whom the writer almost seems to know as a friend and father." This he contrasts with "the procedure of some recent authors who affect to talk down to Paul from a position of superiority."

Those were the war days of deepest tragedy for Britain. Dr. Stalker, with fine Christian restraint, tells of an illustrated paper, publishing on the same page without prearrangement the portraits of three sons of famous fathers

<sup>1</sup> *Half a Century*, by Ella Broadus Robertson, p. 29.

of the Scottish Manse who had fallen in battle—a son of George Adam Smith, a son of Principal Alexander Whyte and his own son, Frank. This was in reply to Dr. Robertson's letter of sympathy.

The next year, in a letter, Dr. Stalker seeks to explain A.T.R.'s power in exegesis. Speaking of the volume, *Paul's Joy in Christ*, he says: "You excel more in exegesis. . . . You have the art of sustaining the interest and vivifying the latent metaphors till they glow with feeling. I do not know where such power comes from; but it must, I think, be from personality and character."

In a letter of this period Dr. Stalker mentions how, along with his ever-increasing influence and usefulness, there had come into Dr. Robertson's family heart-breaking sorrow by death and incurable disease. The great Scottish scholar comforts his American colleague with words of simple Christian faith. Scholarship did not blur their vision of "things not seen," nor lessen their simple, earnest faith in God and in his Word.

One of the most tender and beautiful friendships was that with *Dr. F. B. Meyer*, the renowned mystic and Bible expositor beloved on both sides of the Atlantic. Their deep fellowship began in 1905 at the Baptist World Congress in London, and lasted for almost a quarter of a century. In the last (dictated) letter from Christ Church, London, in his eighty-second year, Dr. Meyer wrote: "Ours was love at first sight: and though a valley lies between, I feel that nothing has really altered." When it was issued in 1911, he thought *The Glory of the Ministry* "the best of all your many books, and that is saying a good deal." The next year

he wrote from Regent's Park Chapel, London: "I do value your friendship so much, and we must get a hundred years in heaven for a quiet talk. My first eight hundred are mortgaged, but we might manage the next century; but will make the exact arrangement later. I think I shall have to leave the perfecting of the New Testament Greek till I get there: only I fear they will confiscate even your Grammar at the heavenly custom house." In 1916, during the agony of the war, he wrote: "The boy has been 'missing' for four months. . . . If he has gone over, we are proud to have contributed our mite to this great war for the emancipation of humanity from awful menace. I long to see you all again."

At the time of the Jubilee (1923), Dr. Meyer wrote: "In the *Review and Expositor*, you are described as a Veteran (!! ) New Testament scholar. . . . Now surely there is some mistake. You cannot be old, and have no right to a Jubilee. It was only yesterday, or the day before, that we used to sit together at Conventions. . . . It is so good to find you loved and honoured. . . . Your virtues have been unequivocal and your position four-square for the Gospel of our Lord." In 1925, Dr. Meyer was distressed that he was going to Canada just as Dr. Robertson was going to England, and added: "But my love for you has not burnt down to grey ash."

In his last letter (1929) he reveals how a saintly man can probe his own heart, as well as the hearts of others, and discern hitherto unrecognized ministerial temptations at the very foot of the Throne itself: "I want to tell you what the Spirit of God has been showing me lately: *that I have*

*acquired a reputation for sanctity from the facility with which I have discoursed on the inner secrets of the Life Hidden in God.* I see how easily this may grow upon one. . . . I have only just caught sight of it. *But, it makes one want to creep into heaven unnoticed.*" He closed a wonderful correspondence with the words written seventeen years before, reminding his friend of their engagement: "Believe in my love! Let us have a hundred years quiet talk beneath the Trees of Healing." Writing of Dr. Meyer, A.T.R. once wrote: "He is a wonderful man and has left a permanent mark on me."

Dr. H. R. Mackintosh of the Free Church College of Edinburgh, the eminent historian of Luther and Calvin and reverent Christian scholar, carried on an interesting correspondence with Doctor Bob for a quarter of a century (1909-1934). After the First World War (1920) he visited the States and Louisville. Later, speaking of his visit, he wrote: "All my memories of America are particularly pleasant, but none give me more happiness in recollection than those I brought away from Louisville. I do not wonder at Ian Hay describing it as the most delightful place he had visited in America."

Dr. Mackintosh read "*with admiring consternation*" Dr. Robertson's list of his first twenty-two books, most of them, as the Scottish professor remarked, in their third or sixth edition, and adds, that it was "really a wonderful life-work." In a letter to Mrs. Robertson in 1934, upon the passing of Dr. Robertson, he recalled "a happy evening spent in the Robertson home" which, he remarked, "seemed to me an abode of singularly deep peace and love," and, speaking of

Dr. Robertson, said, "His name is covered with light and honour for all who love the New Testament."

*Dr. John A. Hutton*, formerly pastor in Glasgow, and the present editor of the *British Weekly*, was one of that circle of "high fellowship" of which Doctor Bob wrote in 1911. Two years later Dr. Hutton wrote of those happy days: "I have my 'dream' in which I see you and all those good friends at Northfield, like Bunyan's good women, 'sitting in the sun, talking about the things of God.'" In 1914, speaking of the "Big Grammar" which he had just received, he wrote: "I look forward to using your book all the days of my life," and later said, "I can claim, however, that you do not outdo me in regard and affection for yourself." Speaking of his prospective course of lectures before the University of Glasgow under the *Alexander Robertson Trusteeship*, he wrote: "He must have belonged to your wide-ranging family." Shortly before the close of the First World War, speaking of the co-operation of America and Britain, he wrote: "For all the coming tasks of this world, we are blood-brothers."

*Principal A. M. Fairbairn* of Mansfield College, Oxford, was one of the first group of English and Scottish friends made in 1905. Of that memorable visit to the ancient seat of learning Dr. Fairbairn wrote: "You and Mrs. Robertson left a most green and pleasant memory in Oxford. It is rarely that a stranger makes himself so beloved as you were. Life is too short to allow us to forget or lose so happy a friendship." When Dr. W. O. Carver a few years later visited Oxford, Dr. Fairbairn repeated to him the happy impression made by the Robertsons on Oxford.



To those who know the reticence of Britishers, this was superlative appreciation. Of course, it must be said that when the British do break the ice, the resultant fellowship is a complete immersion.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE MAN

Dr. Robertson was a man of fine physical presence. He was slightly under six feet tall, with an inclination to stoop in later life. He had a well-formed frame, slender in his youth, that filled out in subsequent years. In his younger days his skin was pink and not easily tanned. His clear blue eyes were a striking and impressive feature of his countenance. A former student who later became his pastor speaks of "the penetrating quality of his eyes" that seemed to "see straight through you." Those "keen eyes were made keener, almost terrible, by the . . . smile behind them." Usually that smile softened to whimsicality, as if he were thinking of something half-humorous or far-away. His head and brow were nobly formed, evincing at a glance high intelligence and personality.

His nervous system was very sensitive. A former and beloved colleague mentions this as explaining much that was unusual in his manner which sometimes tried the patience of his friends. He felt things keenly and often reacted to them vibrantly. Yet, if in his over-earnestness he touched the feelings of a friend, he was at once the Christian gentleman. He suffered from nervous strain from overwork in his young manhood, but wholly recovered, as was demonstrated by his enormous labors of later life.

His was of an affectionate nature. His early love for his parents and family circle, and later for wife and children, was constant and beautiful. His devotion to the woman of his choice so grew with the years, that toward the very last, despite his lifetime of devotion, he could write that only in recent years he had come to know what real love was.

His love for his own children, and for all children, was of peculiar sweetness and depth. A beloved student and lifelong friend tells of having Sunday dinner with the Robertsons in company with a fellow-student when the children were small, after the morning church service: "When the front door was opened there was the immediate din of childish voices, and the junior Robertsons came racing downstairs and along the hall to meet us. Dr. Robertson knew what it meant. It was evidently a part of domestic ritual. Down he went on hands and knees, on Sunday morning and in his Sunday clothes, and one by one, the little Robertsons rode piggy-back from room to room. . . . It was my privilege to tell this story before a Committee of the Trustees at a later date. I recall that Dr. George Boardman Eager wept. To me it was a revelation of a heart of infinite love. . . ." In one of his lectures on *The Wisdom of the Son of Sirach* of the Interbiblical Period, he said: "[It] has very little tenderness for children. He opposes caressing them and advocates harshness. . . . This is that of his teaching I can least endure. It is not like Jesus."

One of his students, a former fellow in his department, recalls an incident which happened while traveling in the train with him. A little girl was sitting across the aisle from

him playing with her doll. A lurch of the train smashed the dolly's head. The parents appeared unconcerned. The heart-breaking sorrow of the little one was too much for his tender father-heart. He called the child, gained her confidence, talked to her like a father, explained how her dolly could have a new and prettier head. He dried her tears and brought smiles back to her little face. The incident deeply impressed the student.

While on lecture-tours he wrote frequently and beautifully to his children. They were always on his mind, and he continually wrote instructions to the careful and assiduous mother at home concerning the veriest details regarding the children: "Don't let the children go into town without telling you where they are going"; and charged her concerning their medicine, food and clothing, all of which was not meddlesomeness, but evidence of his constant love and interest for his own little ones. Once he asked that each child write him a letter—he so eagerly craved their love and fellowship.

His love of nature all through his life was profound. He reacted with simplicity and enthusiasm to his material environment. From his early boyhood at Cherbury through all the years he loved flowers. When visiting Cool Spring, North Carolina, his father's home, he wrote: "[Today is] an idyllic Sunday morning in the country. . . . I am wearing a double Cherbury rose."<sup>1</sup> Again: "I picked a few violets that bloomed in the open." He mentioned in his letters sweet peas, dahlias, roses, plum blossoms, and jonquils. While

<sup>1</sup> When the Robertsons moved from Virginia to North Carolina, they took with them a rose-cutting and called it "the Cherbury rose."



DR. ROBERTSON AND HIS GRANDCHILDREN





absent from home one spring, and as the mother was leaving for a lecture-engagement, the children ran after her and shouted: "*Send a telegram to father—a crocus is up!*"

He loved birds. In the *Recollections* of his little daughter she says: "He knows the name . . . of every bird." He calls their names in his letters—mocking-birds, wood-robins, Bob-whites, cardinals, Carolina wrens, whip-poor-wills, ordinary wrens, phoebes, pewees, red-birds, and ordinary robins. Once he wrote of the children of a mother-robin and her nest near his room. On another Sunday he tells of "a glorious Spring Sunday, full of sunshine and flowers and cardinals and mocking-birds."

He loved the mountains. He wrote with enthusiasm of the Rockies on his first journey to the Far West. He loved the mountains of his own native state, of which he wrote: "I never come to Virginia that I do not have a reverential feeling like coming to see my mother," and adds: "As I came by Lynchburg yesterday afternoon the Peaks of Otter rose in majestic splendor." At Northfield he wrote from the broad veranda: "The prospect is enchanting as I look up Connecticut Valley. The river, the bridge, the green hills, the mountains in the back-ground, remind one of the Lake District."

He loved, also, the sea. At Biloxi, Mississippi, he recorded the impressions nature made upon him: "I spent this afternoon sitting by the sea in silent reverie. That to me is the greatest thing here. The wash and wail of the eternal sea drown the cares and toils of life, and lift me up to God." At Ocean City: "I love the sea and the roar of the breakers and the tang of the salt air." He tells of lakes, waterfalls,

swamps, fishes, whales, frogs, coyotes and deer. Nothing escaped his eye.

He was very human as regards foods. He frequently described rather fully his meals. He was particularly fond of fruits, especially peaches and berries of all kinds.

Once while Mrs. Robertson was absent from home he joyfully reported to her how they at home had put up a whole bushel of Elbertas and one of Hale peaches, twenty quarts in all, and how he had enjoyed helping to peel them as he used to do as a boy. He liked the feel, as well as the taste, of peaches, and that made him akin to us all.

His son and namesake writes interesting things of his father as a man: "He loved to go to market and come back with bushels of peaches and vegetables wisely selected. He was the best judge of a watermelon I have ever known; also the best hand at building a fire. He was expert in reading a R.R. timetable, and loved to plan a railroad trip, and did it very thoroughly.

"He liked to order a good dinner in a good restaurant. If he was spending money, as he rarely did, on himself, he spent enough to make it worthwhile.

"He loved to take the children to the circus, and that included the whole works—side-shows and the 'Wild West' that was to follow, including pop-corn and ice-cream."

His correspondence does not reveal a man whose head was always in the clouds of theology and Bible exposition, or beneath the surface digging up Greek roots; but as a very normal man enjoying the beauties and bounties provided by the God of nature.

His was not a one-track mind. He was not only a Greek

specialist, but surprisingly versatile. A good friend of his writes: "He knew about everything that was to be known about Greek, and he surprised us by seeming to know a good deal about everything."

He took interest in bettering the housing of country-schools, the plans for governmental improvement of farm conditions, prohibition, certain phases of politics, and similar matters of general interest.

As a church member he took his place among his brethren without pretense. All authority of the classroom was left behind when he entered the house of God. Two of his former pastors write of him with special love, admiration, and even enthusiasm. He was a pastor's helper. He sympathized with, encouraged, and stood by his pastor. One of his pastors, after speaking of special encouragement Doctor Bob had given him, says: "For this strengthening grace I owe more to Dr. A. T. Robertson than to any living human being as the channel of such help from God." This pastor adds this notable appraisal: "Nothing but the cleanest and purest words fell from his lips. His life, as I knew him as his pastor, was absolutely antiseptic to evil," and, "He was as nearly a perfect pastor's helper as I ever knew."

His body was tragically sensitive to cold infections which attacked larynx, pharynx, and bronchial tubes. The fear of these infections became almost an obsession with him and the source of vast amusement to his students and friends.

One of the stories that had wide currency was that some daring and unfeeling student, one day in winter, shortly before Doctor Bob entered the pleasantly warm classroom, put a piece of ice on the thermometer and brought the

mercury down to a dangerous low. When the great Hellenist arrived and examined the thermal register, he almost shouted his horror and immediately dismissed the class and hurried to the comfortable warmth of his office. Another story, the exact reverse, was that a lighted match ran the thermometer up to a dangerous high, necessitating the lowering of the windows from the top, though the day was chilly. Though these stories are doubtless exaggerations, there can be no doubt but that this idiosyncrasy was based on a real physiological fact to which Dr. Robertson reacted strongly.

His biographer is convinced that Dr. Robertson's letters to the family explain this rather pronounced characteristic. His correspondence, while out on his far-flung lecture itineraries, demonstrates his susceptibility to throat and bronchial trouble. His constant references to his "colds," and visits to doctors become dreary and painful reading. These attacks seriously interfered with his lectures, and on several occasions necessitated his suspending the series and rushing home for cure, to the great distress of his audiences. A contributory cause of this trouble was his susceptibility, also, to excessive perspiration which made him an easy prey to cold infections. So strongly did he react to bad heating and ventilation that he publicly expressed the whimsical wish that he were financially able to endow a school for the training of janitors. The result of it all was that his fight against this real enemy to his health and usefulness was to him a serious matter.

Like most men, Dr. Robertson's personality was paradoxical. He had characteristics which, on the surface, seemed contradictory. He was, indeed, many-sided, yet his was a



whole and not a divided personality. He was harsh at times, as we have seen, yet under other circumstances as tender as a woman. Being a Scot, he was economical to the extreme in some phases of finance, yet most bountifully generous in others.

When in the midst of the labors of writing the "Big Grammar" he was loath to share his time with his friends. On the other hand, no one was more ready to spend time and labor for his friends. Indeed, this was one of his outstanding virtues. He was always helping others—writing, planning and making requests for his friends. He was never too busy to help those who sought his aid in understanding the Scriptures and doing the work of the Lord. He became a sort of teacher-at-large not only to ministers, but to laymen as well. Inquirers wrote him on all kinds of subjects—could Christ sin?, the form of baptism, infant baptism, consubstantiation, and more practical questions such as divorce and communion wine. His assembly lectures aroused widespread interest in the study of Greek. Frequently laymen wrote concerning their studying that language. At one place a Greek club was formed which sought his advice.

All testify to his loyalty—to his friends, the causes he espoused, the Kingdom of God, and the Lord Jesus. He was not a quitter. He belonged to the "good and *faithful* servant" class.

How many-sided, indeed, was this unique man. He could reduce others to tears, yet friends make numerous allusions to his own tears. These were sometimes in connection with his teaching of the life of Christ. This story is typical. Professor Robertson had been lecturing on the sympathy and

helpfulness of Jesus in his daily life among the people of his day, which He continues to bestow upon us now. A beloved student had occasion to go immediately from class to his office and there he found his teacher seated in his chair "his eyes swimming in tears which overflowed to his cheeks." Without awaiting a word from his student, he broke out: "And to think, Brother . . . , he's the same Jesus now, the same Jesus now."

Old students can never forget his description of the crucifixion at the end of his lecture course on the life of Christ which lingered like a spell over them for days. One of his students, after a lecture of this kind, found him in his office in tears.

Sorrow came to him, as to all mankind. He saw his loved ones slip away from him one by one—some by untimely death, as in the case of his beloved sister, Maud, in his third college year, and of his brother John in his young professor days. He outlived all his family. These were sore and prolonged griefs to him. Aside from the confirmed invalidism of his first-born son, the most shattering of his life's griefs was the sudden taking away of Charlotte, his "radiant daughter" on November 3, 1917. The exquisite volume, *Charlotte*, prepared by Miss Grace Landrum, which had wide currency, made a deep impression not only on friends in America, but also on his British friends. He went about like a wounded warrior smitten in the joint of his armor, bleeding inwardly. His dedication of his *Studies in Mark's Gospel* to Charlotte touched all hearts. Dr. Stalker, writing of it, said: "As long as she helps to inspire such books as those you now are giving to the world, she will still be active

even in this earthly sphere. . . ." He and the loved one by his side were borne up by the love of multitudes.

Dr. Robertson was always prompt in extending sympathy to others in their sorrow. In the days of the First World War such letters were frequent. That war took a fearful toll of England's best. Correspondence with his dear friend, Dr. Charles Brown, London pastor, brought this classic of Christian sorrow and fortitude: (December 12, 1916) "Our darling boy was the flower of the flock. A student for the ministry, I hoped that one day he might succeed me. But he has done more in his twenty-one years than I have accomplished; and he has done no evil. He was a pure Knight of Christ, a stainless soul. He could have escaped military service, but his conscience was too tender. He went into all the horror and hell of modern warfare, and in his second engagement God took him out of it to His heaven of perfect peace and unbounded glory. He died like a hero; and in our grief there is not a little of grateful pride."

But laughter and tears live side by side on the Avenue of Life. His friends knew his sense of humor, so characteristic of his lectures and sermons, and often enlivened their letters with a good story or pleasantry. A professor friend who was anticipating the pleasure of having Doctor Bob as guest, along with the mention of other arrangements, announced: "So after you have eaten your chicken stuffed with sage, [the students] will have the joy of hearing the sage stuffed with chicken." One of the most beloved and eminent of modern Baptist preachers of England, in a letter, asked, as if conversing from an easy chair after a good dinner: "Did you ever hear of the Irishman who dreamt

that His Holiness offered him a glass of whisky, and asked him whether he would have hot or cold water; and on his choosing hot, his Holiness went away to get it; and before he came back, as the Irishman said: 'I woke, and shure, I've always been sorry that I didn't say *cold*, and then I'd 'ave had the drink afore I waked'!"

The Robertson hospitality was proverbial. It was constant and beautiful. That was before the decline of New Testament hospitality. They did not send church guests to hotels or boarding-houses. The Robertsons took them into their home as the Broaduses did before them. Such hospitality was one of the rapidly diminishing roses that linger on the stem of a civilization that has well-nigh passed.

American and foreign friends were unanimous in their praise and appreciation of Mrs. Robertson as a hostess. Dr. Angus, the Scotch-Irish Presbyterian professor of St. Andrew's College, Sydney, Australia, intimate friend of many years, spoke of the "two most delightful homes of Christian domestic sanctity in which I have had the precious privilege of hospitality—a Methodist home in England [of Dr. James Hope Moulton] and a Baptist home in Louisville." To indicate what that abundant Robertsonian hospitality involved it need only be mentioned that during the sessions of the Southern Baptist Convention in Louisville in 1899, the Robertson home was full of guests, and the dining table set for eighteen for a whole week. The domestic situation during those days was quaintly described by Mrs. Robertson as follows: "Mr. Robertson went to the Convention; 'Sister' went to the W.M.U. meetings; and I went to the market."

In his extension work he traveled widely in America.

He confessed, however, that he was not a good traveler. Because of his New Testament studies being so closely related to geography and archeology, his friends have wondered why he never traveled and studied in Palestine, Syria, and Asia Minor, as the great Broadus had done before him with such amazing profit to himself and his students. Friends and missionary organizations on several occasions made plans for him to visit the Holy Land and the Orient and pressed their invitations; but he never found a time which to him seemed propitious. The result was that he never saw the lands of the Bible, nor carried his wondrous messages to the peoples of distant mission fields as other Bible expositors had done. The reason seems to have been that he was so engrossed in his widespread and intensive extension lecture-work in the homeland that he could never find the time, circumstances, and conditions for foreign travel that fitted into his plans.

A man is greater than the sum of all his works. It was in this train of thought that one of his students wrote: "Your greatest contribution to me was yourself." That was superlative praise. On the other hand, Doctor Bob had enough of life's experiences to hold down any too great sense of spiritual pride. There was the case of the brother who in the early days complained of his lack of spirituality. Others criticized because he did not know how to play. He was berated because of his levity. An editor indicated that he gave too much time to extension work, implying there he neglected his Seminary work. He was called a crank by a pastor. Yet seven years before his passing, a Christian woman said to her pastor that whenever she heard Dr. Rob-



ertson speak she felt she had been with the Lord and listening to one of the Apostles.

If we are really the men "as ithers see us," then, what manner of men are we, indeed?

## CHAPTER XII

### HOME LIFE

By ELEANOR ROBERTSON EASLEY

It is almost bedtime, but we are waiting in the warm nursery for Father to come up and put the top to our block tower. It is as high as the tallest of us can build it now. Father comes in and stops to do something to the flickering Bunsen burner. Then he sees the tower. "Waiting for me to put it higher?" he says. Up it goes, two blocks this way, and two that. Father is on tiptoe. "Are there any more blocks?" He is standing on a nursery chair now, and the tower almost reaches the ceiling, as we hand him the last two blocks. It is a glorious sight. "Watch out, everybody, it's coming down!" With a long shiver, the tower crashes to the floor.

\* \* \* \* \*

Father has taken me to the little country church where he preaches once a month, at Pleasureville. It is very exciting to be visiting just with him. The people at whose house we stay are kind to us. I sit with them in church and can tell that they would rather hear him preach than anybody.

\* \* \* \* \*

Another time I go to an Associational Meeting with Father. And we drive a horse and buggy from where we

are staying to the church. Father is thinking about his speech and I go to sleep and fall out of the buggy. I wake up in the middle of the road, not a bit hurt, with two strange men offering me my first chewing gum, and Father hurrying back to get me. Later on I am out in the churchyard enjoying the bustle going on over fixing the dinner tables. A cloud is coming up and the ladies send word in for the men to please stop and come get their dinner, but they do not pay any attention, and the rain comes down on everything. I wish Father had been talking. He would have stopped. He is sorry about the good food that is ruined. A whole clothes basket full of damp pies and chicken is handed in at the house where he has taken me in out of the rain. It is my birthday, and Father asks a special blessing at the breakfast table so that God will know I am six years old.

\* \* \* \* \*

We are going to Grandpa's. It takes a long time to get all packed up. At last the big trunks are out on the sidewalk and we are all out there too with satchels and dolls. We are going in the cab to the station, but we must go good and early because the cab may get held up by a street car, and we miss the train. We are safely in the Pullman and Father breathes a sigh and pulls out his watch. "Well, here we are, and the train does not leave for twenty minutes yet." We have breakfast next morning in the diner, and Father orders figs and cream for all of us. He used to have figs in his garden when he was a boy. We spend the next night at a hotel and early the next morning Uncle Martin comes for us in a big surrey with two horses. It is a long ride out to

Cool Spring. The road gets rougher and narrower. Father and Hattie are on the same side of the surrey and almost tip it over at one place. Father says, "I thought you were going to fix this road before we came back, Martin." Grandpa and Aunt Josephine are standing at the gate waiting for us. They call Father "Archie." Aunt Josephine has "one of her big dinners," with ham and chicken both, and chocolate cake. We know there is a jar of cookies, too, on the back porch for us to eat whenever we want to. We can go barefooted every day and we play with corncob dolls and chips from the wood-pile. Grandpa smokes a long pipe and listens while Father and Uncle Martin talk. We go to the "bottom" with Father and Uncle Martin, and Father cuts whistles for us from the willows. There is a river at the end of the last corn field, and Father makes an echo, hollering with both hands to his mouth.

\* \* \* \* \*

Father says there will be a circus parade Saturday morning and we must all come down to the Seminary to see it go by. We go up the high steps and push the heavy door. The Seminary has a smell of its own. Down the hall to the left, the next-to-last door on the right, is Father's study. We knock and he says "Come in." Father is writing at a big desk. He pulls out his watch and says it is not time for the circus yet and we had better look at the dictionary for a few minutes. We climb over the books on the floor and turn the pages of the big dictionary on the stand in the corner until we find the colored flags. Father puts his pen down and gets his overcoat and hat. "Come on, we'd better go on out front now." On the top steps of the Seminary is a fine

place to see the parade. The people down on the sidewalk are in each other's way, but we can "see over the heads of all," like the boy in our song book. Father tells us what the animals in the cages are, and we count the elephants. When the calliope squeals down Broadway Father says, "Well it's about dinner time. I may as well go on home with you." So we all go.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is a Sunday afternoon and we are all going to the park. Father helps everybody on to the street car, and we ride past the race track, clear to the end of the line. We get off and start into Jacob's Park and the first thing we know we have climbed all the way to the top of the "mountain." Father picks sassafras leaves for us, a pair of "mittens" apiece. He knows the name of every tree and bird.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is a lot of company in the dining room, some of them from England. We can't even sit at the side table, but have had our dinner first, and hang over the bannisters to listen to the laughs. That must have been a funny joke Father told.

\* \* \* \* \*

Archie falls off the porch swing and gets a big bump on the marble floor. Father rushes out and picks him up and calls him "baby" and Archie doesn't mind.

\* \* \* \* \*

I have had another sore throat. It was from not wearing my rubbers to school, but Father comes home at dinner time with a pot of pink hyacinths, and that makes up for everything. My tonsils are to come out and when they do



Father is at the hospital with a whole pound of marshmallows from Benedicts.

\* \* \* \*

Madame Schumann-Heink is singing at the armory. Father takes Charlotte and me and buys us each a chrysanthemum to wear on our coats and takes us to Kleins afterwards for ice-cream, not at the counter, but in the dining room at a table.

\* \* \* \*

Christmas has come at last. Father is making fires early in his red plaid bathrobe. The dancing lights make plain the bulges of the stockings hanging in a row along the mantel. Father says, "Christmas gift!" and then gives us each our proper stocking to explore in bed while the room warms.

After breakfast Father is on our side about hurrying up with the Christmas tree. He gives out his presents first, a brown bear on wheels, an electric train, two dolls with real hair, and books—we are sure we can count on the books. Father has gotten them by a mysterious method known as "writing reviews" for the Seminary magazine. We are nearly grown-up before we wonder how the "review" of Peter Rabbit looked in the Seminary magazine. Packages of all sizes are taken off the tree, and the rhymes read. If a present has lost its label Father always says, "For somebody from somebody." Father is pleased with his own presents and never minds that he gets the same ones every year,—a shaving pad of colored tissue papers, a pocket pincushion, a bookmark, and a pen-wiper.

After Christmas dinner Father asks if we would not like to go to see Mother Cary. We really like to go to see her on other days. She loves Father so much because he lived with her when he was a student, and Cary is named for her. But on Christmas we wish it would start snowing right after dinner. It hardly ever does, though, and we trail off with Father, leaving Mother for a nap. The walk must make us feel better, because we have a good time and tell Mother Cary all about our tree. She has an apple and a piece of cake for each of us, and we thank her for the presents she has given us. The walk with Father home from Mother Cary's on Christmas afternoon is the best of the year. It is so comfortable to think of our new toys and books waiting for us and of the library fire, and the schoolfree days we will have for play. The street lights are just coming on, and we pass the last church and are in at our own gate.

Father has had a book "accepted." We are not sure what that is, but we all go to the drugstore and Father "sets us up" to the latest kind of ice-cream sundaes, chocolate, strawberry or nut. Father says that when the "Big Grammar" is printed he will take us to the Seelbach hotel for a turkey dinner.

\* \* \* \* \*

We are going across the ocean so Father can study for the "Big Grammar." The boat is more fun than anything that has ever happened. Father finds us a good place to stay in Oxford near a park with deer in it and swans. We stay with Hattie when he and Mother go off on trips, but we all go to London ourselves to see the King. Father pays a

shilling apiece for us to sit in an upstairs window and see the parade with the King in it. A big policeman tries to keep us from crossing the street and pushes us back in the crowd, but Father says, "These children can't be crushed to death down here. They've got to get where they can see." Then the policeman helps us get through the people and we sit up at the windows and can see everything. Father tells us when we have seen the King. He hardly shows, but the Queen has on a lavender dress and hat. Father goes to the library every day, but we play in Kensington Gardens and see Queen Victoria's doll house.

For a long time after we come home Father works on the "Big Grammar" so late that we are in bed before he gets home, but one day he looks happy and says it is printed, and we dress up in our best clothes and all go and have a turkey dinner at the Seelbach with music playing all the time and more than anybody can eat.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the last years of his life, Dr. Robertson and his wife experienced one of the deepest joys of parenthood, in seeing their children happily married. Eleanor married John Allen Easley, pastor in Manning, S. C., now Professor in the Bible Department of Wake Forest College; and their children are Jack, Charlotte, Nancy Hyde and Eleanor Broadus. In May, 1934, just four months before the end, their son, Cary, now Sunday Editor of the *Courier Journal*, married Priscilla, daughter of Professor Preserved Smith of Cornell University.

They have a little daughter, Charlotte. And just three days before his going, he took part in planning for the wedding of Archie to Malvina Blackburn, daughter of Missionaries to Persia. They have a young Martin, aged three.

E. G.

## CHAPTER XIII

### "THE PERFECT DAY"

We search in vain for words adequately to describe the end of a Christian's life. The Apostle Paul uses at least five similes for death: a falling asleep in Jesus; a falling in battle of a warrior overcome by "the last enemy"; the moving from a tent into a "house not made with hands"; a departure on a journey "to be with Christ"; and the finishing of a race. Bunyan likens the end of Christian's journey to the crossing of a river. Multitudes of us think of death as a sunset. The dear ancient sage, however, wrote best of all when he said: "The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The "perfect day" is at noon, not at sunset. From dawn the light waxes and shines increasingly on the path of the traveler till noon, and wanes till sunset.

The path of the righteous pilgrim does not always go straight across a level plateau or prairie. How often it winds through deep wadies and mountain valleys which in the earlier hours of the day lie in deep shadows. It is only when the sun is at zenith that the pilgrim's way is perfectly illuminated. Death comes to the Christian at high noon.

How true was this for our friend. His physical frame was indeed waning; his circulatory system becoming impaired, though all unknown to him. Though the tent was showing



signs of wear and hard usage and about to be "struck," the tent-dweller was nearing his noon of faith and hope and love and service, ready at any moment to move into his palace.

It is amazing to read of the pace Dr. Robertson set for himself that last year of 1934. He lectured and preached with much, if not all, of his wonted power. Friends marveled at his surprising vitality. On April 2nd, he wrote from Memphis: "My work has started off with a bang and a boom." This, indeed, sounded like old times. The invitations continued to come in that would have consumed most of the rest of the year.

In these days he gave to the press his last book which he saw published. It had what might seem to have been a premonitory title, *Passing On the Torch*. In fact, when it came out in England his old friend, Dr. Hutton, in the *British Weekly* of June 14th, remarked: "We hope that the title does not embody even the most delicate foreboding of our old friend that this, his latest volume, he proposes shall be his last." Even though it proved to be his last, Dr. Hutton says of it: "It is as lively and cogent a religious book as we have read for many a day." So his bow abode in strength to the last.

It was in this season of this last year that he made his decision to make a translation of the New Testament for Harper's. He had refused some years before to undertake such a work in collaboration with a former colleague, saying that he would not undertake another major literary task. He gives, however, his reason for this change of purpose: "I can thus preserve for popular use the result of much of

my life's work." It was at this juncture that Mrs. Robertson wrote him: "I feel worried about the translation business. It seems easy to you," and added, "Of course, that's your affair, but you are my affair." Her judgment was true. He was not equal to the task. The pallor of his once pink face told her and her friends that all was not well with him. The arteries, those channels of life, were losing their elasticity and demonstrating what the doctors say—that we are as old as our arteries.

Had he definitely renounced this heavy task, it might have been that with care and caution he would have been spared to his loved ones and the world for a goodly period. On the other hand, hard work had become a habit and joy, and the burden of having nothing to do might have proved equally fatal. How frequently "the zeal of the Lord's house" consumes His people. His former pastor, Dr. John F. Fraser, in an article in the *Review and Expositor* in 1935, wrote: "We know that one man of our age has gone to his grave without a speck of rust."

With the opening of the Seminary in September he resumed his teaching and translation. About a week before the end he reached the question of the meaning of "daily bread" in Mat. 6:11. With his usual scholarly care he reconsidered the various renderings of this unusual expression (*artos epiousios*) which occurs only twice in the New Testament, and then in connection with the Lord's Prayer. Strangely enough, it has been found thus far only once in the *Koine* outside these passages. The question is, does the expression mean: (1) the bread which we need today; or (2) the bread for tomorrow's use; or (3) in general, bread we need

day by day? The one instance in a papyrus where the expression occurs is a reference in the notes of a house-wife regarding the daily supply of bread for the family. The majority of the new translations give the sense of "bread for the day," only Moffatt gives it "give us today bread for tomorrow." For more than an hour Dr. Robertson discussed this question at home, finally giving the sense of "bread for the day," that is, any day. Plainly the petition does not lend its support to hoarding.

On Monday, September 24, 1934, he worked in his office in the morning, and returned after lunch and resumed his labors till class time. He had reached the verse in Mat. 14:21 which tells of the feeding of the Five Thousand, and made a notation indicating where to resume his work when he should have returned from class. He left his books open and scattered over his desk as usual, ready for instant reference. He went to meet his class; and then to meet his Lord.

A member of the class gives a vivid picture of that final recitation at three o'clock. The weather was not exceptionally warm, yet the sudden and copious perspiration, accompanied by a deep purple, that poured from his face, told the story. The "last enemy" had laid his hand on the soldier of the Cross. Seeing that further lecturing was impossible, he stopped and said: "I don't know what is the matter with me, but I don't feel well. I'm going to dismiss the class." It was then about three-thirty. When Dr. Davis heard the class leaving he knew that something unusual had happened, for Dr. Robertson never dismissed his classes ahead of time. He came, therefore, and he and Dr. Robertson talked for a moment.

Dr. Davis took his beloved chief home in his car, but did not remain. Mrs. Robertson put him to bed and read aloud till the physician came. It was a strange coincidence that in the story, the words of our Lord, “I am the resurrection and the life,” occurred three times. The doctor arrived and at once diagnosed it as an attack of *angina pectoris*, and administered medicine; and sat watching. Observing a sudden change in Dr. Robertson’s condition, he exclaimed in a low voice, “O, this is very serious!” and as he administered a hypodermic injection to aid the tired heart, weakening to its final pause, he looked at Mrs. Robertson on the other side of the bed, and said: “I’m afraid that this will not have much effect.” She asked with hushed and frantic quickness, “*You mean . . . !*” He nodded, and whispered, “He’s had a stroke!” And immediately while he spoke the great servant of God was with his Lord.

The news of Dr. Robertson’s sudden going stunned those of the Seminary circle and the entire city. A beloved student spoke nobly for all his fellows when he wrote: “If a storm had blown away the buildings and left Doctor Robertson, the Seminary would have been more real than it was with him gone.”

\* \* \* \* \*

The funeral services took place on September 27th in the Fourth Avenue Baptist Church. The spacious sanctuary was thronged with the membership, the faculty and student-body of the Seminary, and numerous fellow-Christians and citizens of the city. In keeping with the desires of the family and in harmony with his Christian life, the services were impressive in their simplicity and dignity. It was appropriate

that he was laid to rest from among his church brethren with whom he had served his Lord with such humility, devotion, and efficiency.

Dr. A. R. Christie, the pastor, presided and spoke for the church. President John R. Sampey, life-long friend and colleague, spoke for the Seminary; and Dr. J. R. Cunningham, President of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary, spoke on "Dr. Robertson as Neighbor." His two favorite hymns were sung: "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go," reaching the climax in the hymn that so beautifully summed up his life's devotion to his Lord:

O, could I speak the matchless worth,  
O, could I sound the glories forth  
Which in my Savior shine!  
I'd soar and touch the heavenly strings,  
And vie with Gabriel while he sings  
In notes almost divine.

In the Seminary Lot in Cave Hill Cemetery, there lies upon his grave a granite cross, surrounded by ivy from his home, with the inscription: "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."



ALPHABETICAL LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS TO  
DOCTOR BOB'S BIOGRAPHY

Allen, Clifton J., Nashville, Tennessee

Bagby, A. Paul, Louisburg, North Carolina

Bagby, H. A., Chester, South Carolina

Barnes, William W., Seminary Hill, Texas

Baucom, Herbert W., Jr., Statesville, North Carolina

Beall, Noble Y., Atlanta, Georgia

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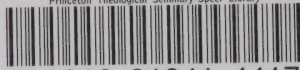
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